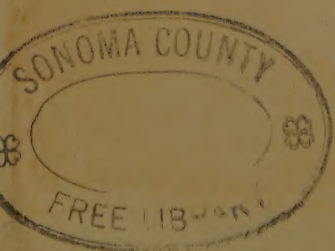
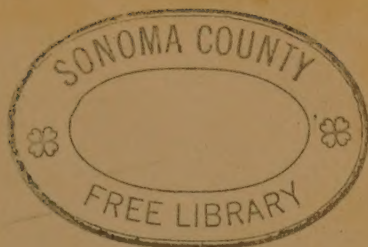


A Treasury of Plays For Children

MONTROSE J. MOSES









IN THE TOYMAKER'S SHOP.

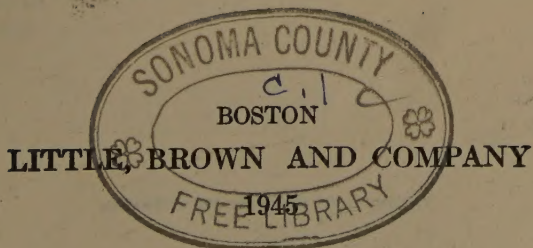
The Toymaker of Nuremberg.

A TREASURY OF PLAYS FOR CHILDREN

EDITED BY
MONTROSE J. MOSES

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY
TONY SARG

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Orchestra Two
Has eyes of blue,—
And so has Orchestra Three;
And they both love fun,
Like Orchestra One,—
And that's as it all should be.

Dear Orchestra Two,
With heart so true,
Our love for a play is certain;
May Orchestra Three,
Like you and me,
Thrill at the rise of a curtain.

So, Orchestra Two,
This book to you
I edit in trust for Tad—
Who is Orchestra Three
To you and me,—
His Mother, your Chum, and his Dad.

"OLD WELL"
NEW HARTFORD
CONNECTICUT
May, 1921

A NOTE OF ACKNOWLEDGMENT

When the Editor first thought of compiling this "Treasury of Plays for Children", he asked a number of authors to gather around his Table of Contents. It is, therefore, with gratefulness that he acknowledges the presence of Mrs. Frances Hodgson Burnett, through the courtesy of her own consent and that of her publisher, Samuel French; Mr. Tony Sarg and Mrs. Hamilton Williamson, who know so much about puppets and the strings that make them dance; W. Graham Robertson, Esq., who sent *Pinkie* all the way from England; Mr. Stuart Walker who, with the permission of Messrs. Stewart & Kidd, gave us from his Portmanteau Theater a lovable hero; Lady Gregory, through the consent of her publishers, Messrs. G. P. Putnam's Sons; Messrs. E. P. Dutton & Company, and Samuel French, who have issued editions of the world-famous *Punch and Judy*; Miss Marguerite Merington (thanks to Messrs. Duffield & Company), who writes in an English style worthy of King Arthur's Court; Miss Constance D'Arcy Mackay (through Messrs. Henry Holt & Company), a pioneer writer of dramas for amateur players; Mr. John Bennett (by permission of The Century Company), whose *Master Skylark*, in the dramatization by Anna M. Lütkenhaus, is an excellent Elizabethan hero; Mr. William C. DeMille, who has made many worthy efforts to establish a Children's Theater in New York; Miss Alice Gerstenberg, a lover of Lewis Carroll, to whom she dedicates her dramatization; Mr. Austin Strong, whose *Toymaker* deserves to be loved as broadcast as dolls and Teddy Bears; and *The Seven Old Ladies of Lavender Town* (by consent of Harper & Brothers).

With such a rare Company, the Editor feels that his book has caught the joyous, imaginative mood of his guests — a

mood ably sustained by the quaint pen and brush of Mr. Tony Sarg. All that is needed, now, is to find a goodly company of readers: the Table of Contents is spread for them; the authors will wait upon them — while the Editor, as head caterer, can vouch that the fare is of the best the market affords.

MONTROSE J. MOSES.

WARRANTED HARMLESS

"Warranted Harmless — *That is one good point to be assured of before we put plays into the hands of our children,*" says a mother, looking at this book in the bookseller's shop.

"But, mamma," says her little girl, "are they entertaining?"

"Aye, mamma, are they entertaining?" repeats her brother: "I never will read them, unless they are warranted entertaining as well as harmless. Of all things, I would never read plays, unless they divert me: what else are they good for?"

"Nothing, certainly. I want to see whether they look entertaining," says the little girl, "but I cannot, yet, for mamma is reading the preface; and you know, brother, you never like prefaces."

"Never. They always are stupid, and tell us that every book is entertaining — there's no believing them. Besides, they are always so long."

"This is short, at any rate," — says the little girl, peeping at the pages over her mother's shoulder.

"Well! — what does it tell us?"

"It tells us, in the first place, that these plays were written at ——"

"No matter where, my dear."

"Many years ago; in the year ——"

"No matter when, my dear."

"They have been lying by, nine years or more ——"

"No matter for that either; though I know it is Horace's old advice," says the boy: — "but that will not make the plays divert us the more, if they are not diverting."

"They were originally written," continues the little girl, "for the amusement of a private family."

"I don't care for whose amusement they were originally written. I do not know why authors always tell us that."

"But listen, my dear: they were read to the young people they were written for on their birthdays! — Oh, brother! oh, mamma! I should like to have a play read to me on my birthday."

"If it was entertaining, I suppose you mean," persists the sturdy boy; "for plays being read on all the birthdays in the world would not make them entertaining if they were tiresome."

"Certainly, brother. But listen, my dear, not one of the audience fell asleep, the author says ——"

"The author says! — Ah! but perhaps, without the author's seeing it, some did sleep. I know I have gone to sleep when people were reading very grand things."

"But not plays, brother."

"Yes, even plays, when read, — I do not mean acted. Acting plays I always like."

"Some plays, they say, are good only for reading."

"Those, I say, are good for little or nothing to my mind," says the boy: "and if these are of that sort, I will have none of them."

"Listen, brother — some of them have been acted."

"With unbounded applause, does not the author say? that always comes next."

"No; here is nothing about unbounded applause: but it says, that one little play, which was acted, made people laugh."

"Laugh! really laugh! — then it might do for us, my dear. Which of them was acted? — what's the name of it?"

"I do not know; the preface does not tell that."

"Prefaces never tell the thing one wants to know," says the boy.

"But mamma will look over the plays for us," says the little girl, "and see which will do for our acting."

"I should like to look them over for myself," said the boy.

"Do so then, my dear," says the kind mother, putting the book into his hands.

"But we cannot judge without reading them all."

"Read them all, my dear, then," says the mother; "that is just what the author desires, that young persons should read, judge, and decide on these plays for themselves."

"I like that! — that is what I like!" cried both the little critics, drawing up their heads, while their mother read to them the last words,

"It is for young readers to determine whether these little plays are amusing or not. They — and they only — can pronounce the sentence which the author most wishes to add, WARRANTED ENTERTAINING."

—With slight changes, this conversation forms the preface to *Maria Edgeworth's "Little Plays for Children,"* published in London, in 1827.

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A TREASURY OF PLAYS FOR CHILDREN

ABOUT THE LITTLE PRINCESS

There are a number of books written by well-known authors and dealing with memories of their childhood. I would recommend Laura E. Richards' "When I Was Your Age", Frances Hodgson Burnett's "The One I Knew Best Of All", and W. D. Howells's "A Boy's Town." They may not, in every respect, be of holding interest to boys and girls, but in each one there are incidents as graphic in story quality and as charming in description as Mrs. Kate Douglas Wiggin's recollection of a railroad ride she once had with Charles Dickens.

So I turn to Mrs. Burnett's girlhood record, and, in the chapter, "Literature and the Doll," find this quotation, very apt and to my present purpose. She writes:

"When I recall the adventures through which the Dolls of the Small Person passed, the tragedies of emotion, the scenes of battle, murder, and sudden death, I do not wonder that at times the sawdust burst forth from their calico cuticle in streams, and the Nursery floor was deluged with it. . . . She was all the characters but the heroine — the Doll was that. She was the hero, the villain, the banditti, the pirates, the executioner, the weeping maids of honour, the touchingly benevolent old gentleman, the courtiers, the explorers, the king."

Nearly every one of us has the same recollection — the same ambition to take every part in a play has kept us awake at nights in exciting tremor to make the attempt. I recall aiding in a melodrama, "On Board the Mary Saint Elizabeth," which some of my boy neighbours and I concocted in the nursery, "when we were your age"; and when the time came to toss over the side of the sinking vessel one of the crew — a cat — there was always a dispute among the remaining actors as to which one of us should go over the side, dare the rug and rugged waves, and rescue the drowning sailor on our broom raft.

It is a good principle that all theaters for children should be founded on the idea that no pedagogical theory need hide the ultimate goal — “to supply”, as Mrs. Heniger, founder of the Children’s Educational Theater, says, “a hitherto unsupplied though universal demand — the demand of children and young people for interesting entertainment”, and she quotes the statement of a child who witnessed and took part in a production of Shakespeare’s “The Tempest”, and who declared that “All the people in the neighbourhood knew about the ‘Tempest’, and them that don’t, I tell them.”

It was that child-appeal which caught the tenement boys and girls, and made them kings and queens rather than street gamins, under Mrs. Heniger’s direction. To them the act of wearing a crown or royal robes was the fact of being royal; and, no matter whether or not they could speak English, these foreign children, in the crowded section of downtown New York, wanted to wear the clothes of “make believe.” So, among the children of strange tongues — from all corners of the globe, — Mrs. Heniger gathered the casts of characters for such plays as Mrs. Burnett’s “The Little Princess”, Mr. De Mille’s “The Forest Ring”, Miss Merington’s “Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs”, Mark Twain’s “The Prince and the Pauper”, “As You Like It”, “A Midsummer Night’s Dream”, “The Tempest”, and Mrs. Burnett’s “Editha’s Burglar.” As Dr. J. J. Walsh said, after witnessing the results of the dramatic work done at the Children’s Theater:

“The Educational Theater . . . represents a definite attempt to get back to some of the old-time methods by which people were brought ultimately in contact, not merely for the passing hour of the performance, but for long before, with the thoughts and expressions of great writers.”

There are some stories that seem to have been written only yesterday, so often are they spoken of; yet think how many years ago it was that Miss Alcott’s “Little Women”, “Little Men”, “Eight Cousins”, and “Rose in Bloom” were new. There was a small boy I once knew who began calculating the

fact that "Little Lord Fauntleroy" — the first book he ever read by himself — was written in 1886, nearly thirty-five years ago! Yet if he had only thought of the difference between Lord Fauntleroy curls and the Buster Brown haircut, it would have made him realize, as quickly as Teddy Bears made the Toy-maker of Nuremberg, how fast time does travel.

"Sara Crewe" first appeared in *St. Nicholas* around 1888, when the generation that now belongs to your mother and father was young and first wept over the fate of Sara at Miss Minchin's, as they wept over Nicholas Nickleby at Squeers'. Since that time, the story has been dramatized, and given professionally and by amateurs.

As a matter of record, I include the following:

THE LITTLE PRINCESS

CRITERION THEATER

NEW YORK

January 14, 1903

CAST

SARA CREWE (The Little Princess)	Millie James
LOTTIE	Beryl Morse
JESSIE	Phyllis Phillips
LAVINIA	Pauline Chase
CLARA	Mildred Morris
MISS MINCHIN	Helen Tracy
MISS AMELIA	May Davenport Seymour
BECKY	Louise Galloway
MRS. CARMICHAEL	Mrs. Woodward
JANET	Leonie Darmon
NORA	Edna Hall Smith
MAZIE	Linnie Ruth Gee
DONALD	Donald Gallagher
ERMENGARDE	Mabel Taliaferro
MR. CARRISFORD	Thomas L. Coleman
RAM DASS	Frederic Murphy

MR. CARMICHAEL	Clarence Handyside
MR. BARROW	Frank Kingdon
MR. GUEST	Frank Reicher
MAID SERVANT	Adelaide Alexander
PUPILS AT MISS MINCHIN'S SCHOOL	Edith Storey, Mamie Mc-
	Manus, Lilian Claire,
	Loraine Frost, Mary
	Burroughs, Mabel Gib-
	son, Maisie Banker,
	Enidene Booth, Natalie
	Black, Margery Black,
	Nellie Kirby, and Helen
	Larkin.

"A Little Un-Fairy Princess", by Mrs. Burnett, was produced in London, at the "Avenue", September 18, 1902; at the "Shaftesbury", December 20, 1902, and transferred to "Terry's", January 19, 1903, at which time its name was changed to "A Little Princess."

Of Mrs. Burnett's other stories, I would recommend her "Racketty-Packetty House", "The Cosy Lion", and "The Lost Prince."

THE LITTLE PRINCESS

*A PLAY FOR CHILDREN AND GROWN-UP CHILDREN
IN THREE ACTS*

BY MRS. FRANCES HODGSON BURNETT

Characters

SARA.
MISS MINCHIN.
BECKY.
LOTTIE.
LAVINIA.
JANET.
NORA.
JESSIE.
MAZIE.
LILLY.
DONALD.
ERMENGARDE.
AMELIA.
MRS. CARMICHAEL.
RAM DASS.
BARROW.
CARRISFORD.
JAMES [*Servant*].
EMMA.
BLANCHE.
NED.

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THE LITTLE PRINCESS

ACT I

SCENE. *A large schoolroom at Miss Minchin's boarding-school. Central window with view of snow street. Fireplace with fire lighted. On the walls four bracket-lamps and four maps. A green carpet. In front window a platform on which there is a blackboard easel. The room contains a large table, a sofa above fireplace, a piano with bench behind it, and several chairs. Lace curtains behind central window curtains for Ermengarde.*

At the rise of curtain: Jessie at piano; extra Children, Lilly and others in ring. Lavinia and one of the girls sitting. Amelia up stage. Jessie plays a waltz. Children dance, singing "One, Two, Three, Four."

CHILDREN (*singing*).

One, two, three, four.

[*All around the other way. Change dance.*

One, two, three, four.

[*Repeat.*

AMELIA (*breaking in upon the noise*). Stop, stop, children; do stop. I only wanted to try the music before the company came. (*Children stop and get into lines*) Let me look at you all. (*Lavinia crossing*) Don't poke your head forward. Please turn out your toes. (*Lilly has crossed to right*) Lilly, your sash is untied. Let me tie it for you. (*Does so*) You know Miss Minchin —

LAVINIA. Huh! Huh!

AMELIA. I will be very angry if there is any rude or unlady-like conduct this afternoon. The lady and gentleman who live across the street in number 46 are coming in to see you. They have a very large family — nearly all old enough to

go to a genteel school. That's why dear Sara is giving you this party.

LAVINIA. Dear Sara . . . huh! ——

AMELIA. Now, Lavinia, what do you mean by that?

LAVINIA. Oh, nothing, Miss Amelia.

ERMENGARDE. Oh, she did it because she's jealous of Sara.

LAVINIA. I didn't.

ERMENGARDE. You did.

LAVINIA. I didn't.

ERMENGARDE. Did——

LAVINIA. Didn't!

[*This ad lib. three times.*]

ERMENGARDE. Did.

AMELIA (*coming between them*). Stop. I never saw such rude conduct. (*Lavinia laughs*) You are a spiteful child, Lavinia. I believe you *are* jealous. It's very nice indeed of Sara to give you all this party on her birthday. It's not every child who cares about her schoolfellows. And she has not looked at one of her beautiful presents yet because she wanted you to have the pleasure of seeing them unpacked.

[*Children crowd around her.*]

CHILDREN. Ah . . . ! [*Dance around her.*]

ERMENGARDE. Are they going to be unpacked here?

CHILDREN. Yes, yes, yes!

LAVINIA (*sarcastically*). Did her papa send them all from India, Miss Amelia?

LILLY. Did he?

AMELIA (*grandly*). Most of them came from Paris.

CHILDREN. Oh . . . ! Paris.

AMELIA. There is a doll that was ordered months ago.

CHILDREN. Oh, a doll!

AMELIA. And a whole trunk full of things like a real young lady.

LOTTIE (*jumping up and down*). Are we going to see them right this minute?

AMELIA. Miss Minchin said they might be brought in after you had tried the new waltz.

LOTTIE. Tra-la-la! [*Dancing.*]

AMELIA. I am going to tell her you have finished. (*Laughter*)
Now do be nice and quiet when I leave you. (*Ermengarde swings Lottie around*) Lottie, don't rumple your new sash. One of you big girls must look after her. (*Lottie picks up pillow from sofa, ready to throw at Lavinia*) Now do (*at door*) be quiet. [*Exit. As Amelia exits, Ermengarde runs up to door. Children, except Lavinia, form picture on platform.*]

ERMENGARDE. It's all right, girls. She's gone.

[*Lottie throws pillow at Lavinia and runs, with Lavinia in pursuit. Ermengarde runs to Lottie's rescue.*]

LOTTIE (*as Lavinia catches her and drags her*). Ermy, Ermy. Oh! Oh! [*Ermengarde catches Lottie's other hand and drags her away from Lavinia; other Children watch.*]

CHILDREN. Now.

[*Jessie playing piano, Children begin to do "ring around" again, laughing and chattering the while.*]

LAVINIA. I wish you children wouldn't make so much noise. Jessie, stop playing that silly polka.

CHILDREN. No, no, go on, Jessie, go on. [*Lottie runs over and pushes Lavinia twice; falls the second time — hurts her knee.*]

LOTTIE. Oh! Ah! Oh!

LAVINIA. I never saw such rough things. I wish Miss Minchin would come in and catch you.

LOTTIE. I guess it's all right.

BLANCHE. You girls think you are so big. You always try to stop the fun. Jessie, go on. (*Piano begins again*) We're not going to stop, just because you want to talk.

ERMENGARDE. I'm going to be the leader.

[*Jessie stops playing suddenly.*]

CHILDREN. What's the matter?

JESSIE. Oh, girls! Ermengarde has thrown all the music into the piano.

[*Girls crowd around her, and take music out of piano. Ermengarde laughing.*]

LAVINIA. You'd stop fast enough if it was the Princess Sara talking.

ERMENGARDE. Oh, we all *like* Sara. We're not jealous of her.

CHILDREN. [*Exclamations of assent; playing "London Bridge."*]

LAVINIA. Oh, of course you like Sara, just because she's the rich girl of the school and the show pupil. There's nothing so very grand in having a father who lives in India, even if he *is* in the army.

[*Jessie plays.*]

LOTTIE. At any rate he's killed *tigers*, and he sends Sara the most beautiful presents! [*Pulls Lavinia's hair.*]

LILLY. And he's told Miss Minchin that she can have *anything* she wants.

ERMENGARDE. She's cleverer than any of us. My father says he'd give thousands of pounds if I were as clever as she is. She actually *likes* to read books. I can't bear them.

LAVINIA (*contemptuously*). We all know that.

ERMENGARDE. Well, if I am the stupidest girl in the school, Sara's the nicest. You don't see Sara walking with her friends and saying spiteful things.

[*Bell rings off. Children run into straight lines. Ermengarde to blackboard and draws a cat. Lavinia up stage.*]

CHILDREN. Miss Minchin's coming, Miss Minchin's coming!

LAVINIA. Yes, and leading Sara by the hand as if she were a "Little Princess."

ERMENGARDE (*pointing to board*). That old cat, Miss Minchin.

[*Children laugh. Enter Miss Minchin, leading Sara, followed by James, William, Emma, and Becky. Servants carry presents.*]

MISS MINCHIN (*sweeping grandly down*). Silence, young ladies . . . James, place the box (*doll*) on the table and remove the lid. William, place yours there. (*Trunk*) Emma, put yours on the table. (*Nine books*) Becky, put yours on the floor. (*Becky looks at the Children*) Becky, it is not your place to look at the young ladies. You forget yourself. (*Waving servants off*) Now you may leave us.

[*Exeunt servants. Becky starts to follow them. Sara stops her.*]

SARA. Ah, please, Miss Minchin, mayn't Becky stay?

MISS MINCHIN. Becky — my dearest Sara —

SARA. I want her because I'm sure she would so like to see the doll. She's a little girl, too, you know.

MISS MINCHIN (*amazed*). My dear Sara — Becky is the scullery-maid. Scullery-maids are not little girls — at least they ought not to be.

SARA. But Becky *is*, you know.

MISS MINCHIN. I'm sorry to hear it.

SARA. But I don't believe she can help it. And I know she would enjoy herself so. (*Crosses to Miss Minchin*) Please let her stay — because it's my birthday. [*Becky backs into the corner in mingled terror and delight.*]

MISS MINCHIN (*dignified*). Well, as you ask it as a birthday favour — she may stay.

SARA. Thank you.

MISS MINCHIN. Rebecca, thank Miss Sara for her great kindness.

BECKY (*comes forward, making little charity curtseys, words tumbling over each other*). Oh, if you please, Miss — thank you, Miss. I am that grateful, Miss. I did want to see the doll, Miss — that — that bad. I thank you, Miss. (*Sara nods happily to Becky, who bobs to Miss Minchin*) And thank you, Ma'am, for letting me take the liberty.

MISS MINCHIN. Go stand over there. (*Pointing grandly to corner*) Not too near the young ladies. (*Becky backs into corner, rolls down sleeves, etc.*) Now, young ladies, I have a few words to say to you. (*Sweeping grandly up to platform*) You are aware, young ladies, that dear Sara is thirteen years old to-day.

CHILDREN. Yes, Miss Minchin.

MISS MINCHIN. There are a few of you here who have also been thirteen years old, but Sara's birthdays are different from most little girls' birthdays.

CHILDREN. Yes, Miss Minchin.

MISS MINCHIN. When she is older she will be heiress to a large fortune which it will be her duty to spend in a meritorious manner.

ERMENGARDE. No, Miss Minchin — I mean yes, Miss Minchin.

MISS MINCHIN. When her papa, Captain Crewe, brought her from India and gave her into my care, he said to me, in a jesting manner, "I'm afraid she will be very rich, Miss Minchin."

CHILDREN. Oh! — Ah! — Oh!

MISS MINCHIN. My reply was, "Her education at my seminary, Captain Crewe, shall be such as will fit her to adorn the largest fortune." (*Lottie sniffs loudly*) Lottie, do not sniff. Use your pocket-handkerchief. (*Ermengarde wipes Lottie's nose. Lottie sniffs again. Miss Minchin coughs Lottie down*) Sara has become my most accomplished pupil. Her French and her dancing are a credit to the seminary. Her manners — which have caused you all to call her Princess Sara — are perfect. Her amiability she exhibits by giving you this party. I hope you appreciate her generosity. I wish you to express your appreciation by saying aloud, all together, "Thank you, Sara."

ALL. Thank you, Sara.

ERMENGARDE (*alone*). Thank you, Sara.

BECKY. I thank you, Miss.

SARA. I thank *you* for coming to my party. And you. [*Retires.*]

MISS MINCHIN. Very pretty indeed, Sara. That is what a real princess does when the populace applauds. I have one thing more to say. The visitors coming are the father and mother of a large family. I wish you to conduct yourselves in such a manner as will cause them to observe that elegance of deportment can be acquired at Miss Minchin's seminary. (*Ermengarde poses in corner*) I will now go back to the drawing-room until they arrive. Sara, you may show your presents. [*Exits. Ermengarde imitates her walk.*]

ERMENGARDE. Sara, you may show your presents!

AMELIA (*coming out from behind*). Ermengarde —

ERMENGARDE. Oh! Miss — (*Amelia crosses to door*) Amelia, please forgive me — I did — didn't —

[*Exit Amelia. Children laugh and flock around the boxes on table, etc.*]

SARA (*getting chair from piano*). She caught you that time, Ermy. (*Getting on chair behind table*) Which shall we look at first? (*Picking up books*) These are books, I know. [*Trying to untie them.*]

CHILDREN. Oh — books — Oh! [*Disgusted.*]

ERMENGARDE (*aghast*). Does your papa send you *books* for a birthday present? He's as bad as mine. Don't open them, Sara.

SARA (*laughing*). But I like them the best — never mind though. This is the doll. (*Uncovering long wooden box*) I'll open that first. [*Stands doll upon its feet. Doll is on a metal stand.*]

CHILDREN. Oh! — Ah! — Oh!

LILLY. Isn't she a beauty? [*Becky gets stool from above door and stands on it to see doll.*]

JESSIE. She's almost as big as Lottie.

LOTTIE (*dancing down*). Tra-la-la.

LILLY. She's dressed for the theater. See her magnificent opera-cloak.

[*Lavinia does not get on floor.*]

ERMENGARDE. She has an opera-glass in her hand.

SARA. So she has. (*Getting down*) Here's her trunk. Let us open that and look at her things; Ermy, you open the other. (*Takes trunk with Jessie down stage; opens it. Ermy takes other one with help of Jessie and opens it too. Children crowd around trunks, sit on floor, looking at the clothes. Becky looks on from behind*) Here is the key.

CHILDREN. Oh!

SARA. This is full of lace collars and silk stockings and handkerchiefs. Here's a jewel-case with a necklace and a tiara of diamonds. Put them on her, Lilly. All of her underclothes. Ah, look. [*Showing.*]

ERMENGARDE. Here's a velvet coat trimmed with chinchilla, and one lined with ermine, and muffs. Oh, what darling dresses! A pale cloth, trimmed with sable, and a long coat. (*Lottie takes coat and puts it on*) A pink, covered with white little buttons, and a white tulle dress, and dresses, dresses, dresses!

SARA. And here are hats, and hats, and hats. Becky, can you see? [*Rises.*]

BECKY. Oh, yes, Miss, and it's like 'eaven. [*Falls off stool backwards.*]

SARA (*rises*). She is a lovely doll. (*Looking at doll*) Suppose she understands human talk, and feels proud of being admired.

LAVINIA. You are always *supposing* things, Sara.

SARA. I know I am — I like it. There's nothing so nice as supposing. It's almost like being a fairy. If you suppose anything hard enough, it seems as if it were real. Have you never done it?

LAVINIA (*contemptuously*). No — of course not — it's ridiculous.

SARA. Is it? Well, it makes you happy at any rate. (*Lavinia turns away; changing her tone*) Suppose we finish looking at the doll's things when we have more time. Becky will put them back in the trunk. [*Lottie goes up to doll, to see tiara.*]

BECKY (*comes forward quickly — shyly*). Me, Miss? Yes, Miss. Thank you, Miss, for letting me touch them. (*Down on knees, wiping hands*) Oh — my — they are beautiful.

LAVINIA (*at table, catching Lottie touching doll*). Get down this minute. That's not for babies to touch. [*Takes her.*]

LOTTIE (*crying*). I'm not a baby — I'm not — Sar-a, Sar-a — oh!

JESSIE. There now, you've made her cry, — the spoiled thing.

SARA (*runs to Lottie; kneeling*). Now, Lottie. (*Puts her on side*) Lottie, dear, you mustn't cry.

LOTTIE (*howling*). I don't want to stay in a nasty school with nasty girls.

SARA (*to Lavinia and Jessie*). You ought not to have scolded her. She's such a little thing. And you know she's only at boarding-school because she hasn't any mother. [*Children sympathetically. Jessie to door.*]

LOTTIE (*wailing*). I haven't any mamma.

JESSIE. If she doesn't stop, Miss Minchin will hear her. [*Er-mengarde gets tiara from doll.*]

LILLY. And she'll be so cross that she may stop the party. Do stop, Lottie darling. I'll give you a penny.

LOTTIE. Don't want your old penny.

ERMENGARDE. Yes, do stop, and I'll give you anything. [*Offering box.*]

LOTTIE. She called me a baby. [*Crying.*]

SARA (*petting her*). But you will be a baby if you cry, Lottie, pet. There, there.

LOTTIE. I haven't any mamma.

SARA (*cheerfully*). Yes, you have, darling. Don't you know we said that Sara'd be your mamma. Don't you want Sara to be your mamma? (*Lottie stops crying*) See. (*Rising and giving doll to Lottie*) I'll lend you my doll to hold while I tell you that story I promised you.

LILLY. Oh, do tell us a story, Sara. [*Puts doll on chair.*]

JESSIE. Oh, yes, do.

CHILDREN. Oh!

SARA. I may not have time to finish it before the company comes — but I'll tell you the end some other time. [*Lottie takes doll to chair.*]

LAVINIA. That's always the way, Princess Sara. (*Passionately*) Nasty little spoilt beast. I should like to *slap* her.

SARA (*firing up*). I should like to slap you too. But I don't want to slap you — at least I both *want* to slap you and should *like* to slap you.

CHILDREN (*in group, interested in fight*). Oh, Oh!

SARA. We are not little gutter children. We are old enough to know better.

LAVINIA. Oh, we are *princesses*, I believe — or at least one of us is — Jessie told me you often pretended to yourself that you were a princess.

SARA (*getting control of herself*). It's true. Sometimes I do pretend I'm a princess. I pretend I am a princess so that I can try to behave like one.

CHILDREN. Ah!

ERMENGARDE. You *are* queer, Sara, but you're nice. [*Hugs her.*]

SARA. I know I'm queer, and I try to be nice. Shall I begin the story?

CHILDREN (*ad lib.*). Story. Oh, oh! Yes, yes, begin, Sara, do.

SARA. I'm going to turn all the lights out. It's always so much nicer to tell a story by firelight.

[Turns out brackets with switch above fireplace; gets on sofa for story. All the children sit, except Lavinia, who stands near the piano. Children on the floor in front of the sofa. Ermengarde goes up to the window and pulls curtains apart and makes up in them for ghost.]

LILLY. It's such fun to sit in the dark.

SARA. Once upon a time ——

ERMENGARDE *(from behind curtain)*. Woo-o-oo ——

JESSIE. What's that?

SARA. It's nothing but the wind. Once upon a time ——

ERMENGARDE *(coming down in curtains)*. Whoo-oo-oo-oopee ——

[Frightens Children. Sara turns on lights. Children scream and get up; fall on Ermengarde and take curtain off her. Laugh.]

CHILDREN. Oh, it's Ermengarde.

LILLY. Begin again, Sara. *[Sara turns out lights.]*

ALL. Yes.

SARA *(all seated as before, — Sara on sofa)*. Once upon a time — long ago — there lived on the edge of a deep, deep forest a little girl and her grandmother.

LILLY. Was she pretty?

SARA. She was so fair and sweet that people called her Snowflower. She had no relations in the world but her old grandmother, Dame Frostyface.

JESSIE. Was she a nice old woman?

SARA. She was always nice to Snowflower. They lived together in a little cottage thatched with reeds. Tall trees sheltered it, daisies grew thick about the door, and swallows built in the eaves.

CHILDREN. Oh, Lottie!

LILLY. What a nice place!

SARA. One sunny morning Dame Frostyface said, "My child, I am going a long journey, and I cannot take you with me, and I will tell you what to do when you feel lonely. You know that carved oak chair I sit in by the fire. Well,

lay your head on the velvet cushions and say, 'Chair of my grandmother, tell me a story,' and it will tell you one."

CHILDREN. Oh!

SARA. "And if you want to travel anywhere, just seat yourself in it, and say, 'Chair of my grandmother, take me where I want to go.'"

ERMENGARDE. Oh, I wish I had a chair like that.

LOTTIE. Oh, go on, Sara.

CHILDREN. Do go on.

ERMENGARDE. And so ——

LOTTIE. And so ——

SARA. And so Dame Frostyface went away. And every day Snowflower baked herself a barleycake, *and every night the chair told her a beautiful new story.*

ERMENGARDE. If it had been my chair, I should have told it to take me to the King's Palace.

SARA. That is what happened — but listen. The time passed on, but Dame Frostyface did not come back for such a long time that Snowflower thought she would go and find her.

LOTTIE. Did she find her?

SARA. Wait and listen. One day she jumped into the chair and said, "Chair of my grandmother, take me the way she went." And the chair gave a creak and began to move out of the cottage and into the forest where all the birds were singing.

ERMENGARDE. How I *wish* I could have gone with her.

SARA. And the chair went on, and on, and on — like a coach and six.

LOTTIE. How far did it go?

SARA. It traveled through the forest and through the ferns, and over the velvet moss — it traveled one day, and two days, and three days — and on the fourth day ——

LILLY. What did it do?

SARA (*slowly*). It came to an open place in the forest where a hundred workmen were felling trees and a hundred wagons were carrying them away to the King's Palace.

ERMENGARDE. Was the King giving a ball?

SARA. He was giving seven of them. Seven days' feasting to celebrate the birthday of his daughter, the Princess Greedaland.

LOTTIE. Did he invite Snowflower?

SARA. Listen. The chair marched up to the palace, and all the people ran after it. And the King heard of it, and the lords and ladies crowded to see it, and when the Princess heard it was a chair that could tell stories she cried until the King sent an order to the little girl to come and make it tell her one.

LOTTIE. Did she go in?

LILLY. Oh, how lovely.

SARA. The chair marched in a grave and courtly manner up the grand staircase and into the palace hall. The King sat on an ivory throne in a robe of purple velvet, stiff with flowers of gold. The Queen sat on his right hand in a mantle clasped with pearls, and the Princess wore a robe of gold sewn with diamonds.

LILLY. Oh, what splendid clothes!

SARA. But Snowflower had little bare feet, and nothing but a clean, coarse linen dress. She got off the chair and made a curtsy to the grand company. Then she laid her head on the cushion, and said, "Chair of my grandmother, tell me a story," and a clear, silvery voice came out from the old velvet cushion, and said, "Listen to the story of the Christmas Cuckoo." [*Door-bell peals.*]

ALL (*jumping up from floor and sofa, forming two lines, in readiness for the visitors*). Miss Minchin is coming — Miss Minchin is coming.

[*Enter Miss Minchin, followed by Amelia. Becky under table.*]

MISS MINCHIN. What are you naughty children doing in the dark? Amelia, turn up the lights immediately. (*She does so with switch above fireplace*) How dare you?

SARA. I beg pardon, Miss Minchin. It was all my fault. I was telling them a story, and I like to tell them in the fire-light.

MISS MINCHIN (*changing*). Oh, it was you, Sara. That is a different matter. I can always trust you.

LAVINIA (*aside*). Yes, of course, if it's the Princess Sara, it's a different matter.

MISS MINCHIN (*speaking off to Mrs. Carmichael*). Won't you come in, Mrs. Carmichael?

[*Enter Mrs. Carmichael, followed by Donald, Mazie, Nora, and Janet in a line. Donald has mother's skirt in his hand, playing horse; three children are dressed for the street. They follow their mother to sofa and sit down.*]

MISS MINCHIN. She is (*referring to Sara*) such a clever child. Such an imagination. She amuses the children by the hour with her wonderful story-telling.

MRS. CARMICHAEL. She has a clever little face. [*Ermengarde offers to make friends with Donald, who fights her into corner.*]

MISS MINCHIN. Won't you sit here, Mrs. Carmichael? [*Indicating sofa.*]

MRS. CARMICHAEL. I hope I won't disturb the dancing if I am obliged to leave you suddenly.

MISS MINCHIN. You will not disturb us, although we shall, of course, be very sorry.

MRS. CARMICHAEL. Mr. Carmichael has just had bad news from an important client in India. The poor man has suddenly lost all his money and is on his way to England, very ill indeed.

MISS MINCHIN. How distressing!

MRS. CARMICHAEL. Mr. Carmichael may be called away at any moment. He said he would send a servant for me if he received a summons to go. If it comes I shall be obliged to run away at once. The children wanted so much to see the dancing that I did not like to disappoint them.

MISS MINCHIN. Sara, my dear, come here. (*Aside to Mrs. Carmichael*) Her mother died when she was born. Her father is a most distinguished young officer — very rich, fortunately. (*To Sara*) Shake hands with Mrs. Carmichael. (*Sara does so. To Mrs. Carmichael*) Sara is thirteen years old to-day, Mrs. Carmichael, and is giving a party to her

schoolfellows. She is always doing things to give her friends pleasure.

MRS. CARMICHAEL (*motherly woman, pats Sara's hand*). She looks like a kind little girl. (*Lottie brings doll over to sofa and shows it to the Carmichael children*) I'm sure my children would like to hear her tell stories. They love stories, and some day you must come and tell them one. (*Turns and sees doll*) Oh, what a splendid doll! Is it yours?

MISS MINCHIN (*grandly*). Her papa ordered it in Paris. Its wardrobe was made by a fashionable dressmaker. Nothing is too superb for the child.

LOTTIE (*to Sara*). Sara, may that little boy hold your doll?

SARA. Yes, dear. [*Lottie takes doll to Donald, who boxes it away from him, boy fashion.*]

LOTTIE (*taking doll out of harm's way*). He's one of the large family across the street — the ones you make up stories about.

MRS. CARMICHAEL (*good-naturedly*). Do you make up stories about us?

SARA. I hope you won't mind. I can see your house out of my window, and there are so many of you, and you all look so happy together, that I like to pretend I know you all. I suppose things about you.

LILLY (*the Children have been standing in two lines listening to all this*). She has made up names for all of you.

MRS. CARMICHAEL. Has she? What are they?

SARA. They are only pretended names — perhaps you'll think they're silly.

MRS. CARMICHAEL. No, I shall not. What do you call us?

LOTTIE (*solemnly*). You are Mrs. and Mister Mont-mor-ency.

MRS. CARMICHAEL (*laughing*). What a grand name! And what do you call the children?

SARA (*shy but smiling*). The little boy in the lace cap is Ethelbert Beaucham Montmorency — and the *second* baby is Violette Cholmondeley Montmorency, and the little boy with the fat brown legs and socks is Sidney Cecil Vivienne Montmorency.

LOTTIE (*interrupting and dancing*). Then there's Lillian Evangeline — and Guy Clarence — and Maude — Marion — and Veronia Eustacia — and Claude Audrey Harold Hector.
[Laughs and goes into corner.]

MRS. CARMICHAEL. You romantic little thing!

SARA (*apologetically*). I shouldn't have *supposed* so much about you if you hadn't all looked so happy together. *My* papa is a soldier in India, you know, and my mamma died when I was a baby. So I like to look at children who have mammas and papas.

MRS. CARMICHAEL (*kissing Sara*). You poor little dear, — Miss Minchin *must* let you come and have tea with us.

MISS MINCHIN. Certainly, certainly. Sara will be delighted. Now, young ladies, you may begin the entertainment Sara has prepared for Mrs. Carmichael.

[Enter Maid.]

MAID. A gentleman would like to see you, Ma'am. He says he comes from Messrs. Barrow & Skipworth.

MISS MINCHIN. The lawyers? (*Annoyed*) What can he want? I cannot be disturbed at present. Ask him to wait.

MAID. And if you please, Ma'am, a note for Mrs. Carmichael.
[Delivers same to Mrs. Carmichael, who rises to receive it, and goes down stage. Exit Maid.]

MRS. CARMICHAEL. A note for me? [Takes it. Opens note.]

MISS MINCHIN. Not bad news, I hope?

MRS. CARMICHAEL. Very bad, I am afraid. My husband's client, poor Mr. Carrisford, has just landed, dangerously ill. Much worse. Mr. Carmichael wants me to go and see him at once. I am so sorry to run away like this. It has all been so charming. Thank you for asking us. Come, children. Say good afternoon. Papa needs us. (*Shaking hands with Miss Minchin*) Your school is delightful.

[Exit Mrs. Carmichael and Children in same order as entrance, Donald driving his mother as before.]

DONALD. Geddap — whoa — go along.

ALL. Good-by. Good afternoon, etc.

MISS AMELIA. What a pity she was obliged to leave so soon.

MISS MINCHIN. She was evidently very much pleased.

MAID (*entering*). Will you see the gentleman from Messrs. Barrow & Skipworth, Ma'am?

MISS AMELIA (*meekly*). The children's refreshments are laid in your parlour, sister. Could you see him in here while the children have their cake and sherry and negus?

MISS MINCHIN. Yes. (*To Children*) Now, young ladies, you must go and enjoy the nice things Sara has provided for you. [*Children all troop out.*]

CHILDREN. Cake and sherry and negus.

MISS MINCHIN (*to servant*). Bring the gentleman in here.

[*Exit Servant. Enter Barrow, ushered on by Servant. Barrow is a middle-aged, high-class lawyer, well dressed.*]

MAID. Mr. Barrow, Ma'am. [*Exit Maid.*]

MISS MINCHIN. Good evening, sir. Be seated. (*Indicating sofa*) Of the legal firm of Barrow & Skipworth, I believe?

BARROW. Yes, Barrow, representing the late Captain Crewe, of the ——

MISS MINCHIN (*startled*). The late Captain Crewe? You don't mean to say that Captain Crewe is ——

BARROW (*sits on sofa*). Dead, Madam, dead of jungle fever.

MISS MINCHIN (*shocked*). It seems impossible. How shocking! How sudden!

BARROW. It was sudden. The firm thought that you should be told at once, as his child is in your care.

MISS MINCHIN. Very right and proper. Poor Captain Crewe! Poor little orphaned Sara. (*Handkerchief to her eyes*) She will need my care more than ever.

BARROW. She will indeed, Madam.

MISS MINCHIN. What do you mean?

BARROW. That, as she has apparently no relations to take charge of her, she is fortunate in having such a friend as yourself.

MISS MINCHIN. Most certainly. An heiress to so large a fortune — for I believe it is a very large fortune? (*Barrow clears throat significantly. Miss Minchin takes him up sharply*) What do you mean? You certainly mean something. What is it?

BARROW. She has *no* fortune, Madam, large or small. She is left without a penny.

MISS MINCHIN. Without a penny! It's impossible. Captain Crewe was a rich man.

BARROW. Ah! *Was*, — that's it, Madam, he *was*.

MISS MINCHIN (*leaning forward excitedly*). You don't mean he has lost his money? Lost it?

BARROW. Every penny of it. That young man had too much money. He didn't know what to do with it, so he let a speculating friend — a very dear friend — (*sarcastically*) play ducks and drakes with it. The friend was mad on the subject of a high diamond mine — put all of his own money into it — all of Captain Crewe's — the mine proved a failure — the dear friend — the very dear friend — ran away. Captain Crewe was already stricken with fever when the news came — the shock was too much for him. He died delirious. (*Rises*) Ruined.

MISS MINCHIN. Do you mean to tell me that he has left *nothing*? that Sara will have no fortune — that the child is a *beggar* — that she's left on my hands a little pauper instead of an heiress?

BARROW. She is certainly left a beggar — and she is certainly left on your hands, Ma'am.

MISS MINCHIN (*rising*). It's monstrous. She's in my drawing-room, at this moment, dressed in a pink silk gown and lace petticoats, giving a party at my expense.

BARROW. She's certainly giving it at your expense, Ma'am, if she's giving it. Barrow & Skipworth are not responsible for anything. Captain Crewe died without paying our last bill, and it was a considerable one.

MISS MINCHIN. That is what happened to me. I was always so sure of his payments that I have been to all sorts of expenses since his last check came. I actually paid the bill for that ridiculous doll and its ridiculous fantastic wardrobe. The child was to have *anything* she wanted. She has a carriage and a pony and a maid, and I've paid for all of them.

BARROW. You hadn't better pay for anything more unless you

want to make presents to the young lady. She has *not* a brass farthing to call her own.

MISS MINCHIN. But what am I to do?

BARROW. There isn't anything to do, Ma'am. Captain Crewe is dead. The child is left a pauper. Nobody is responsible for her but you.

MISS MINCHIN. I'm not responsible for her. I refuse to be made responsible for her.

BARROW. I have nothing to do with that, Ma'am. I only know that Barrow & Skipworth are not responsible. [*Bows and turns to go.*]

MISS MINCHIN. But you cannot go like that and leave her on my hands, — I won't have it. I have been cheated; I have been swindled; I'll turn her out into the streets.

BARROW (*impersonally*). I wouldn't, Madam, if I were you; you can if you like, but I wouldn't. Bad for the school — ugly story to get about. Pay you better to keep her as a sort of charity pupil.

MISS MINCHIN. This is infamous. I'll do nothing of the sort.

BARROW. She might teach the little ones, run errands, and that sort of thing.

MISS MINCHIN. Ah, you want to foist her off on me. I won't have her foisted off on me.

BARROW. Just as you please, Madam. The matter is entirely in your hands. Good evening. Very sorry the thing has happened, of course. Unpleasant for all parties. Good evening.

[*Exit. Children off stage singing.*]

CHILDREN (*singing*). "Here we go round the mulberry bush, the mulberry bush, the mulberry bush, — here we go round the mulberry bush, so early in the morning." [*Miss Minchin stands a moment glaring after Barrow. Then she starts toward door. Stops as Amelia enters.*]

AMELIA. What's the matter, sister?

MISS MINCHIN (*fiercely and hoarsely*). Where is Sara Crewe?

AMELIA (*astonished*). Sara? Why, she's with the children in your room.

MISS MINCHIN. Has she a black frock in her sumptuous wardrobe?

AMELIA (*stammering*). Why — what — she has only an old black velvet one that is much too small for her — it is too short for her to wear.

MISS MINCHIN. Go tell her to take off that preposterous pink silk gown, and put the black one on, whether it is too short or not. She is done with finery.

AMELIA. Sister, what can have happened?

MISS MINCHIN. Captain Crewe is dead.

AMELIA. Oh!

MISS MINCHIN. He died without a penny.

AMELIA. Oh!

MISS MINCHIN. That spoilt, pampered, fanciful child is left a pauper on my hands.

AMELIA. Oh! Oh!

MISS MINCHIN. Hundreds of pounds have I spent on nonsense for her — hundreds of pounds — I shall never see a penny of it.

CHILDREN (*outside*). Ha, ha, ha! [*Applause*].

MISS MINCHIN. Go, put a stop to that ridiculous party of hers. Go and make her change her frock.

AMELIA (*gapes and stares*). M-must I go and tell her now?

MISS MINCHIN (*fiercely*). This moment. Don't stand there staring like a goose. Go.

[*Exit Amelia*].

CHILDREN (*singing*). "Here we go round the mulberry bush."

MISS MINCHIN. Hundreds of pounds! I never hesitated at the cost of anything. Princess Sara, indeed! The child has been pampered as if she had been a queen. (*Loud sniffles from Becky under table*) What's that?

BECKY (*coming from under table*). If you please, Ma'am. (*Sobs*) It's me, Ma'am. I hadn't ought to, but I hid under the table when you came in, and I heard.

MISS MINCHIN. You impudent child!

BECKY (*sobs frequently*). Oh, please 'm, I daresay you'll give me warnin', but I'm so sorry for poor Miss Sara — she is such a kind young lady, Ma'am.

MISS MINCHIN. Leave the room.

BECKY. Yes, 'm, I will, 'm, but I just wanted to arst you — Miss Sara's been such a rich young lady — 'm — she's been waited on and — poor — and — what'll she do, Ma'am, without no maid? If — if — oh, please, would you let me wait on her after I'm done my pots and kettles? I'd do them so quick — if you'd let me wait on her — now she's so poor — oh — poor little Miss Sara — Ma'am—that was called a princess.

MISS MINCHIN. No, certainly not. She'll wait on herself and on other people too. (*Stamping foot*) Leave the room this instant — or you — leave this place.

BECKY (*at door, turns*). Wouldn't you?

MISS MINCHIN (*in pantomime, says "Go." Exit Becky. Fiercely*). Wait on her! No, she will not be waited on. (*Enter Sara, with doll in arms, in black dress*) Come here. (*Sara advances a little*) Put down that doll. You will have no time for dolls in future.

SARA. She was the last thing my papa gave me before he died.

MISS MINCHIN. He did not pay for her, at any rate. I paid for her.

SARA (*crossing to chair and putting doll on it*). Then she is your doll, not mine.

MISS MINCHIN. Of course she is my doll. (*Crossing to table*) Everything that you have is mine. For a whole year I've been spending money on all sorts of ridiculously extravagant things for you, and I shall never be paid for one of them. I've been robbed, robbed, robbed!

SARA (*turning from doll, suddenly and strongly*). My papa did not mean to rob you — he did not — he did not!

MISS MINCHIN. Whether he meant to do it or not, he did it — and here I am left with you on my hands. Do you understand?

SARA. Yes, I understand, — Miss Amelia told me. (*Kneels, covering face with arms, in doll's lap, and bursting into tears*) My papa is dead — my papa is dead!

MISS MINCHIN. Stop crying. I sent for you to talk to you, and I have no time to waste. (*Sara sobs*) Stop crying, do you hear? (*Pause until Sara rises and faces Miss Minchin*) You are not a princess any longer. Remember that. You have no friends. You have no money. You have no one to take care of you. Your pony and carriage will be sold at once. Your maid will be sent away. You'll wear your plainest and oldest frocks. Your extravagant ones are no longer suited for your station. You're like Becky — you will have to work for your living.

SARA. If you tell me what to do, I'll do it.

MISS MINCHIN. You will be obliged to do it whether you like it or not. If I do not choose to keep you out of charity, you have no home but the street.

SARA (*sobbing*). I know that.

MISS MINCHIN. Then listen to what I say. If you work hard, and try to make yourself useful, I may let you stay here. You are a sharp child, and pick up things readily. You speak French very well, and you can help with the younger children.

SARA. Yes, I can help with the little ones. I like them and they like me.

MISS MINCHIN. Don't talk nonsense about people liking you. You are not a parlour-boarder now. You have to earn your bread. You will have more to do than to teach the little ones. You will run errands and help in the kitchen as well as in the schoolroom. If you don't please me you will be sent away. Now go. (*Sara crosses to door to go*) Stop, don't you intend to thank me?

SARA. What for?

MISS MINCHIN. For my kindness to you — for my kindness in giving you a home.

SARA (*wildly*). You're *not* kind, you are *not* kind!

MISS MINCHIN. Leave the room instantly. (*Sara starts to go*) Stop. (*Sara stops*) You are not to go to the bedroom you used to sleep in.

SARA. Where must I go?

MISS MINCHIN. In future you will occupy the garret next to Becky's — under the roof.

SARA. The garret, next to Becky's, where the rats are?

MISS MINCHIN. Rubbish! There are no rats there. [*Crossing to door.*]

SARA (*following to chair*). There are. Oh, Miss Minchin, there are! Sometimes Becky can hardly sleep at all. She says that in the garret next to hers they run about all night.

MISS MINCHIN. Whether there are rats or not, you will sleep there. Leave the room.

[*Exit Miss Minchin. Door opens.*]

LOTTIE (*outside*). Sara. (*Enters*) Sara! (*Embraces Sara who is on her knees*) The big girls say your papa is dead, like my mamma; they say you haven't any papa. Haven't you any papa?

SARA. No, I haven't, Lottie; no, I haven't.

LOTTIE. You said you'd be my mamma. I'll be your papa, Sara. Let Lottie be your papa.

SARA. Oh, Lottie, love me; please, Lottie, love me—love me——

CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE. *A garret under the roof at Miss Minchin's; rake roof with garret window, outside of which are showing housetops with snow on them. There are rat holes around. A bed, covered with old blanket, sheet, and old coverlet, badly torn. A table with bench behind it. Chairs, an armchair, and a four-legged stool above fire-place. A wash-stand with pitcher, bowl, soap-dish, and mug. An old trunk. A candle in stick unlighted.*

At the rise of curtain: Wind off stage; window opens and snow flutters through. Stage in semi-darkness. Broken pane in window.

Ram Dass appears on platform back of window, with dark lantern. He raises window, examines room from platform with light,

then beckons Guest to follow him. Enter Guest on platform, also carrying lantern.

GUEST (*kneeling beside Ram Dass*). You saw the child go out?

RAM DASS. Yes, Sahib. (*Guest lets himself down by table through window*) She has been sent out upon an errand.

GUEST. And no one ever enters here, but herself? You are sure?

RAM DASS. Sure, Sahib.

GUEST. Then we are safe for a few moments. We must look about and plan quickly. You have sharp ears; stand near the door. If we hear a sound on the stairs, we must bolt through the window.

RAM DASS (*going to door*). Yes, Sahib. [*Stands listening.*

GUEST. What a place to keep a child in! (*Going to fire*) No fire — no sign of one. (*Crosses to bed*) Blanket thin, sheet miserable. We must alter this.

RAM DASS (*at door*). When first my master thought of this plan, it made him smile, and he has not smiled for many days. He said: "The poor child will think a magician has worked a spell."

GUEST (*back of table, making notes*). She will indeed. It's a curious plan, but the Sahib is a sick man and lonely. Now listen, Ram Dass. You lascars can be as silent as ghosts. Can you, with the other three to help you, steal in through that window, and do what your master wishes, and make no sound?

RAM DASS. Yes, Sahib, Ram Dass can do it. He knows well how to make no sound at all.

GUEST. Will it be safer to do it while she is out upon some errand, or at night when she is asleep?

RAM DASS. At night when she sleeps. Children sleep soundly, even the unhappy ones.

GUEST. As Mr. Carrisford's house is next door, you and I can bring the things across the roof together. Yes, yes, the window is wide enough to allow them to be passed through.

RAM DASS. Shall it be done to-night?

GUEST. Yes. Everything is ready, — the measurements are correct. What's that?

RAM DASS (*at door*). On the staircase two flights below. It is the child herself returning.

GUEST. Here — through here, quickly.

[*Exit through window.*]

RAM DASS (*in window*). Yes, Ram Dass will do this thing to-night. [*Exit. Enter Sara, shabbily dressed, wet, and tired; she closes door and stands a second leaning against it; looks about the room, out of breath and exhausted with climbing up stairs.*]

SARA. I thought I should never get back, never, never. (*To table. Lights candle*) How miserable it looks and how tired I am. (*Takes hat and shawl and puts them on chair*) They are as wet as though they'd fallen in a pond. (*Coming down to armchair; sits in same*) I've been sent out on errands ten times since breakfast. I'm cold — I'm wet — I'm as hungry as a wolf. (*Wind. Rats squeak. Sara has dropped head in lap on square stool. Hears rats, looks up. Wind howls during this pause*) What a noise my rats are making; they must have heard me come in. (*1st rat runs on*) Oh, there's Melchisedek. Poor thing, he's come to ask for crumbs. (*Puts hand into pocket to hunt for crumbs and turns it out*) Are you hungry, too, poor Melchisedek. I'm very sorry, I haven't one crumb left. Go home, Melchisedek, and tell your wife that there was nothing in my pocket. She's not as hungry as I am. (*1st rat off under bed*) Good night. Poor thing. (*Crosses back to armchair, drops into chair, and takes Emily in her arms*) Do you hear, Emily, why don't you say something? Sometimes I'm sure you could, if you tried. You are the only relation I have in the world. Why don't you try? Do you hear? I've walked a thousand miles to-day, — errands and errands, and errands and errands. Errands for the cook, errands for Miss Amelia — and for Miss Minchin — and even for the girls — I had to go for pencils for Lavinia. (*Outburst*) Everybody sends me errands. And because I came in late they wouldn't give me any supper. I'm so hungry I could almost eat you. (*Wind. Passionately*) Do you

hear? (*Pause, and breaks out again*) You are nothing but a doll, doll, doll — you are stuffed with sawdust — you never had a heart. (*Throws Emily on stool and cries. Picks her up; sets her in chair, sits on stool, elbows on knees, and gazes at her relentlessly*) You can't help being a doll, I suppose, any more than good-natured Ermengarde can help being stupid. I oughtn't have slapped you. You were *born* a doll — perhaps you do your sawdust best. (*Knock on door*) I wonder who it is. (*Rises hesitating*) Lottie is in bed and poor Becky was crying when I came through the kitchen. The cook was in a passion and she couldn't get away. (*Opens door, sees Lottie alarmed, surprised. Enter Lottie in nightgown, hugging a birthday doll. Wind*) Oh, Lottie, you oughtn't to come here so late. Miss Minchin would be so cross if she caught you. What do you want, darling?

LOTTIE (*who has run to Sara and is clinging to her*). I want you, mamma Sara. Oh, I had such an ugly dream, and I got frightened —

SARA (*leads her to armchair, and takes her up in lap*). I'll hug you a minute, Lottie, but you mustn't stay, — it's too cold.

LOTTIE. Hug me and kiss me like a real mamma — Sara, it was such an ugly dream —

SARA (*hugs her*). Are you better now, darling?

LOTTIE. Yes. You are such a comfy hugger, Sara — (*Sits up cheerfully, and sees doll on ottoman*) There's Emily. She's not so pretty as Lady Arabella, is she?

SARA. No, but she's the only relation I've got in the world. My papa gave her to me when he brought me to Miss Minchin's, six years ago.

LOTTIE (*putting her doll beside Emily*). There, Emily, Lady Arabella has come to see you. (*To Sara*) Have you seen your rat lately, mamma Sara?

SARA. Yes — poor Melchisedek — he came out to-night to beg for crumbs, and I hadn't any for him. But there, Lottie dear, you must not stay in the cold. (*Coaxing her*) You won't have any more ugly dreams — for Sara will keep think-

ing good dreams for you after you've gone back to bye-lows,
— you must run back now, like a sweet Lottie —

LOTTIE. Oh, but Sara, I like to stay with you. I like your old
garret and Emily and the rat. [*Wind and snow.*]

SARA. But listen to the wind. See the snow coming through
the broken window. You mustn't stay here in your little
nightie. I'll take you to the top of the stairs and you must
go back to bed.

LOTTIE. But mayn't I say my seven times to you before I go?
I have to say it to Miss Amelia in the morning. May I sit
here on your bed — (*does so*) and say it?

SARA (*kneeling in front of Lottie*). Well, you can say it to me
once.

LOTTIE (*singsong*).

Seven times one are seven —
Seven times two are fourteen —
Seven times three are twenty-one —
Seven times four are forty-eight —

SARA (*caressingly*). Oh, no, Lottie, not forty-eight.

LOTTIE (*anxiously*). Not forty-eight —

SARA (*suggestively*). Not forty-eight —

LOTTIE (*catching at straws*). Not forty-eight — then — it's
sume-ty other eight —

SARA (*encouragingly*).

Seven times one are seven —
Seven times two are fourteen —

LOTTIE (*dawning hope*). Seven times three are twenty-one —
(*Excited haste*) Seven times four are twenty-eight —

SARA (*hugs and kisses her*). Yes, that's it — go on.

LOTTIE (*much cheered — singsong*).

Seven times five are thirty-five,
Seven times six are forty-two,
Seven times seven are forty-nine —
Seven times eight are fifty-six —

(*Slowing up*) Seven times — nine — seven times — seven times — ni — nine — seven times nine are — (*Despairingly*)

Oh, Sara, seven times nine is such a hard one.

SARA (*slow, suggestively*).

Seven times nine — are — si — si —

Seven times nine are six —

LOTTIE (*catching her up with a shout of glee*). Sixty-three — seven times nine are sixty-three — (*Rattles off with triumphant glee and ease*)

Seven times ten are seventy —

Seven times eleven are seventy-seven and

Seven times twelve are eighty-four.

SARA (*hugs her*). That's beautiful — all you have to remember is seven fours are twenty-eight and seven nines are sixty-three. Now we must go, pet. [*Sets Lottie down, giving her doll — leads her out of room door. Garret left empty for few minutes, then cautious knock — outside. Door is opened by Ermengarde who at first looks around edge cautiously and enters. Wind. Ermengarde has pile of books under arm, is dressed in nightgown, with bare feet, and has hair done in curl papers.*]

ERMENGARDE. I wonder where's she's gone. (*Rats squeak. Ermengarde screams, runs and jumps on bed*) Oh, these rats — oh — (*ad lib. — Rat comes out from behind wash-stand, stops. Ermengarde drops slipper*) Oh, Melchy — (*to rat*) please go way — oh, do go way and let me get my slipper, — there's a good Melchy — (*As rat moves*) I'll give you a bun to-morrow. (*Rat runs off. Ermengarde, out of bed, hops across floor to get her slipper, and sinks in chair, sighing. She puts on slipper*) I wonder where she's gone. I wonder if that nasty cook has sent her out in all the snow and slush. (*Rises and sees hat and shawl on chair*) No, she's not gone out — there are her hat and shawl, — they are dripping wet. It's a shame. (*Puts books on table*) These came to-day from my papa. He wants me to read *every* one of them, and he'll ask me questions about them when he sees me. It's awful. (*Im-*

patiently) I'm not clever like Sara. I'd as soon take castor-oil as read them, and if I did read them, I couldn't remember what's in them. (*Drops books on floor*) I was born stupid. (*Wind. Rises from chair*) I wish Sara would come. (*Goes to bed*) What a horrible little bed. She must nearly freeze to death on these cold nights. Oh, it is a shame. She's treated worse than poor little Becky, the scullery-maid. (*Rat heard squeaking. Ermengarde screams again, runs to chair, and hides feet under her in terror*) I wish she'd come. (*Enter Sara*) Sara!

SARA. I didn't know you were coming here to-night, Ermengarde.

ERMENGARDE. I crept out of my room after the other girls were asleep. Papa has sent me some more books, Sara. (*Dejectedly pointing to table and books on floor*) There they are.

SARA (*delightedly*). Oh, has he? (*Runs to books, and sits on floor. Looks at titles on books, opens them*) How beautiful. Carlyle's "French Revolution." I have so wanted to read that!

ERMENGARDE. I haven't. And papa will be so cross if I don't. He'll want me to know all about it when I go home for the holidays. What shall I do?

SARA (*excited*). Look here, Ermengarde. If you'll lend me these books, I'll read them, and tell you everything that's in them afterwards, and I'll tell it so that you'll remember it too.

ERMENGARDE. Oh, Sara, Sara, do you think you could?

SARA. I know I can. The little A, B, C children always remember what I tell them.

ERMENGARDE (*pause*). Sara, if you'll do that, and make me remember, I'll — I'll give you some of my pocket-money.

SARA. I don't want your money, Ermy, I want your books. (*Holds them tight in arms*) I want them!

ERMENGARDE. Take them then, — you're welcome. I wish I wanted them.

SARA (*cheerfully*). Well, that's all right. I'm so glad. (*Puts books on floor beside her*) Now let's tell each other things. How are you getting on with your French lessons?

ERMENGARDE. Ever so much better since I began to come up into your garret, and you began to teach me.

SARA. I am glad. (*Looks around room*) The garret would be rather nice if it wasn't so very dreadful. (*Laughs*) It's a good place to pretend in.

ERMENGARDE (*eagerly*). What do you pretend, Sara?

SARA. Well, generally I pretend it is the Bastille, and I'm kept a prisoner here like Doctor Manette in "A Tale of Two Cities."

ERMENGARDE (*interested*). And what else?

SARA. I pretend I have been here for years — and years and years — and years — and everyone has forgotten all about me, and Miss Minchin is the jailer. And I pretend that there's another prisoner in the next cell, — that's Becky, you know, — I've told her about it — and I knock on the wall to make her hear, and she knocks like this, — you know. (*Knocks three times on wall; listens a moment*) She's not there; if she were she'd knock back. Ah!

ERMENGARDE. Ah, it's just like a story.

SARA. It is a story; everything is a story — you're a story, I'm a story, Miss Minchin's a story. [*Rats squeak.*]

ERMENGARDE (*gets on stool and screams*). Ah, there are the rats again. Are you never afraid of the rats, Sara?

SARA (*on floor*). Not now. I was at first, but now they're a part of the story. There were always rats in prisons, and the prisoners tamed them with crumbs. That is how I tamed Melchisedek and his wife. (*Calls rats*) Come on, Melchy dear, come, nice Melchy.

ERMENGARDE (*stumbles*). Oh, don't call them out; come back, Sara. Tell me some more stories — they are so nice. [*They resume former positions.*]

SARA. Well, I tell myself stories about the people who live in the other houses in the square. The *large* family, you know.

ERMENGARDE (*seated on stool*). Did Miss Minchin ever let you go there to tea?

SARA (*shakes head*). No, she said visits were not suited to my station.

ERMENGARDE. Old — cat ———

SARA. But I watch them out of the garret window there. When I stand on the table under it, I can see all up and down the street. That's how I got to know the lascar and the monkey.

ERMENGARDE. What lascar and what monkey?

SARA. The lascar is the Indian gentleman's servant, and the monkey is the Indian gentleman's monkey.

ERMENGARDE. Where do they live?

SARA. They live next door. He is the rich gentleman who is always ill ——— (*Stops and listens*) Didn't you hear something at the window?

ERMENGARDE (*frightened*). Yes.

SARA (*gets up and goes to window*). There's nothing there. (*Laughs*) Perhaps Melchisedek and his wife are having a party under the roof. The lascar lives in the next garret, and the monkey lives with him — one day the monkey ran away and came in through my window, and the lascar had to come after him.

ERMENGARDE. What, that black Indian man in the white turban, Sara? Did he really come in here?

SARA. Yes, and he took the monkey back. I like him and he likes me. I remember enough Hindustani to talk to him a little, — so now he salaams to me when he sees me. Like this ——— (*Salaams. Stops, and listens again*) I'm sure there's something at the window; it sounds like a cat trying to get in. (*Goes to window. Ermengarde stumbles. Turns from window, pleased*) Suppose it was the monkey who had got away again. Oh, suppose it was ——— (*Tiptoes to window, lifts it and looks out*) It is the monkey.

ERMENGARDE (*crossing to end of table*). He lost his way and saw the light. Are you going to let him in, Sara?

SARA (*on table*). Yes, it's too cold for monkeys to be out — they are delicate. I'll coax him in. He's quite close; how he shivers. He's so cold — he's quite *tame*. (*Coaxingly*) Come along, monkey darling, I won't hurt you. [*Takes monkey through window — jumps down.*]

ERMENGARDE (*Sara crosses to end of table, and sits. Ermengarde back of table*). Oh, Sara, how funny he is — aren't you afraid he'll bite you?

SARA. Oh, no — nice monkey, nice monkey — Oh, I do love little animal things — Oh, you queer little darling.

ERMENGARDE (*sits to right of table*). He looks like a very ugly baby.

SARA. I'm glad he's not a baby. His mother couldn't be proud of him — and no one would dare to say he was like any of his relations. I do like you — perhaps he's sorry he's so ugly and it's always on his mind. I wonder if he has a mind?

ERMENGARDE. What are you going to do with him?

SARA. I must take him back to the Indian gentleman. But I am sorry — Oh, the company you would be to a person in a garret!

ERMENGARDE. Shall we take him back to-night?

SARA. It is too late to-night. I must keep you here, monkey my love, but I'll be kind to you.

ERMENGARDE. Where will he sleep?

SARA (*looks around*). Oh, I know — that cupboard — (*Gets up, crosses to cupboard, and opens door*) See, I can make a bed for him here. I'll give him one of my pillows to lie on, and cover him with my blanket. [*Crosses to bed.*]

ERMENGARDE. But you'll be so cold.

SARA. But I'm used to being cold and he isn't. I wasn't born in a tropical forest. Let's make his bed now and see if he likes it. (*Takes pillow from bed*) You bring the blanket. (*Ermengarde takes blanket*) Yes, monkey, pet lamb, you shall have nice bye-lows and go rock-a-bye baby.

ERMENGARDE. What?

SARA. I mean rock-a-bye monkey — (*Makes bed in closet*) And Sara will take you back home to your family. [*Noise outside, of Becky coming upstairs.*]

ERMENGARDE (*frightened*). What's that?

SARA. It's only Becky coming up to bed.

MISS MINCHIN (*outside door*). Rebecca, Rebecca!

SARA. What, — Miss Minchin, — she might come up. [*Ermengarde, looking wildly about the room, suddenly tucks night-gown around her and rolls under bed. Sara hurriedly shuts monkey up in cupboard.*]

MISS MINCHIN (*outside*). Remember, Rebecca, you get up at five in the morning.

BECKY (*outside*). Yes, mum, thank 'e, mum —

[*Miss Minchin heard outside, descending steps. Sara to bed and lifts cover so Ermengarde can get out from under it.*]

SARA. Come out — it's all right. She's gone to bed herself.

ERMENGARDE (*sees she's gone — crawling out*). What if she caught us — — [*Three knocks heard from Becky.*]

SARA (*disappointedly*). Oh, that means — “the cook would not give me the cold potatoes.”

ERMENGARDE. Cold potatoes — were they to feed the rats with?

SARA. They were to feed me with. (*Little laugh. Ermengarde amazed*) You don't know how nice cold potatoes are — if you pretend they are something quite different — and put salt on — that is — if you are hungry.

ERMENGARDE (*aghast*). Sara — Sara — are you ever hungry enough for cold potatoes?

SARA. Yes, I am. I am so hungry now that I could eat — I could eat Miss Minchin if she were different — but she'd have to be very different.

ERMENGARDE. She wouldn't be different enough if you'd put pepper on her as well as salt — Sara — (*suddenly*) I've just thought of something splendid. (*Inspired*) I've just thought of something splendid!

SARA. What is it?

ERMENGARDE (*excited hurry*). This very afternoon, I had a box full of good things sent me. My aunt sent it. I haven't touched it. It's got cakes in it — and little meat pies and jam tarts and buns and red currant wine, and figs and raisins and chocolates. I'll creep back to my room and get it this minute. And we'll eat it now.

SARA (*clutches Ermengarde's arm*). Oh, it makes me faint to hear of it. You are good, Ermy. (*Hug*) Do you think you could?

ERMENGARDE. I know I could.

SARA. Don't make a noise.

ERMENGARDE (*runs to door, peeps out, then back to Sara*). The lights are out. Miss Minchin turned out the gas when she went down. I can creep and creep, and no one will hear me. [*Dance.*]

SARA. Ermy, let's pretend — let's pretend it's a party — and oh, *won't* you invite the prisoner in the next cell?

ERMENGARDE (*delighted*). Yes, yes, let's knock on the wall now, — the jailer won't hear.

SARA (*goes to wall and knocks once*). That means "Prisoner, the jailer has made his last rounds and we can talk." (*They both listen until two knocks are heard in response*) That means "Are you sure it is safe?" (*Knocks three times herself*) That means "Quite sure, I heard the iron gates clang and the key turn in the lock." (*Becky knocks four times*) That means "Is it safe for me to come to you through the secret passage we have dug under the wall?" (*Knocks smartly one knock — and then two — separated by pause*) That means — "Quite safe — come." (*Knock at door is heard*) Here she comes. (*Opens door. Becky enters. She starts at sight of Ermengarde*) Don't be frightened, Becky. (*Catching Becky, who tries to run off*) Miss Ermengarde is our friend; she's asked you to come in here, because she's going to bring a box of good things up here.

BECKY. To eat, Miss — (*Bursting in*) Things that's good to eat?

SARA. Yes, and we're going to pretend a party.

ERMENGARDE. And you shall have all you want to eat — [*All dance and exclaim. Becky stops them by* —

BECKY. Sh — [*Points down.*]

ERMENGARDE. Oh, that old cat, Miss Minchin — but there's Magus and Brazil nuts and lots of good things —

BECKY. Ow 'ev'nly. [*Ermengarde drops shawl.*]

SARA. Ermy, you go for the box and we will set the table.
[*Puts Ermengarde out of the door.*]

BECKY. Oh, Miss — oh, Miss, I know it's you that asked her to let me come. It makes me cry to think of it.

SARA (*cheerfully, embracing her*). No, no, you mustn't cry. We must make haste and set the table. What can we put on it? (*Sees red shawl*) Here's her shawl — I know she won't mind. It will make such a nice red table-cloth. (*Picks it up and spreads it on table with Becky's help*) What next? Oh! (*Clasps hands delightedly*) I know, I'll look for something in my old trunk, that I used to have when I was a princess. (*Runs to trunk, opens it and rummages in it. Stops and sees Becky*) Becky, do you know what a banquet is?

BECKY. No, Miss, is it something to be 'et, or something to be wore?

SARA (*sitting by trunk*). It's a magnificent feast. Kings have them, and Queens, and Lord Mayors. We are going to have one. Now begin to pretend just as hard as ever you can — and straighten the richly embroidered table-cloth. [*Sara turns to trunk again, as Becky straightens table-cloth. Becky then stands, squeezing her eyes tight shut, clenching her hands and holding her breath. Sara takes package of handkerchiefs from trunk, rises to go to table, sees Becky and laughs.*]

SARA. What are you doing, Becky?

BECKY (*opening her eyes and catching her breath*). I was pretending, Miss. It takes a good bit of strength.

SARA. Yes, it does — just at first. But it doesn't take so much when you get used to it. I'm used to it. Now what do you suppose these are?

BECKY (*delighted*). They looks like 'ankerchiefs, Miss, but I know they ain't —

SARA. No, they are not. They are plates and napkins. Gold and silver plates and richly embroidered napkins — to match the table-cloth. These are the plates and these are the napkins. (*Giving each bundle to Becky separately*) You must not take the napkins for the plates, or the plates for the napkins, Becky.

BECKY. Lor', no, Miss. They ain't nothin' like each other.

SARA. No, they're not. If you pretend hard enough. (*Steps back*) Don't they look nice?

BECKY. Jest lovely, Miss. Particular them gold and silver plates.

SARA. Yes, but the embroidery on the napkins is beautiful; nuns did it in a convent in Spain. (*Suddenly*) Oh, Becky, I forgot to tell you. This isn't the Bastille now.

BECKY (*eagerly*). Ain't it, Miss? Lor' now, what has it turned into?

SARA (*grandly*). It's a marble hall.

BECKY. A marble hall? I say —

SARA. Yes, it's a marble hall in a palace — it's a banquet hall.

BECKY (*looking around room, opening eyes wide*). A banquet hall!

SARA. No — a banquet hall — that window opens into the vast conservatory where the tropical plants grow — (*Suddenly*) Oh, that reminds me of flowers. We ought to have some flowers.

BECKY. Oh, yes, Miss, we ought to have some flowers.

SARA. Where can we get flowers from? Oh, the trunk again — (*Runs to trunk, tumbles out the contents. Drags out old summer hat with flowers on it*) Here they are — (*Tears flowers off hat*) What shall we put them in? (*Looks about and sees wash-stand*) Becky, there's something that looks like a tooth-brush mug — but it isn't. It's a crystal flagon — bring it here. [*Becky brings it — Sara arranges flowers in it.*]

BECKY. There you are, Miss, a Christmas Dragon. There's something else there, Miss, that looks like a soap dish — but it ain't. Shall I get it?

SARA (*nods "Yes"*). Yes. [*Becky brings it.*]

SARA (*takes it from Becky*). It's a gold epergne encrusted with gems. (*Wreathes flowers about it*) Oh, Becky, Becky — (*They both gaze with delight. Becky clutches her lips with one hand and lifts them up and down*) Now if we had something for bonbon dishes — there, I remember — I saw something this minute. The darling old trunk — (*Crosses to it*) It's like a fairy. [*Takes out bundle of wool, wrapped in scarlet and*

white tissue-paper. Goes back of table, tears off paper and twists into shapes of little dishes.

BECKY. Ah, Miss Sara, this 'ere Blanket Hall — I mean Banquet 'all, and all them golden gems — ain't them beautiful? [*Sara puts candle on table from mantel shelf. Enter Ermen-garde with hamper of goodies. She starts back with exclamations of joy.*]

ERMENGARDE. Oh, Sara, you are the cleverest girl I ever saw.

SARA. Isn't it nice? They are things out of my old trunk.

ERMENGARDE. And here's the hamper — (*Sets it on chair*)

You take the things out, Sara. You'll make them look nice.

BECKY. Yes, Miss, you take them out — I don't dast trust myself.

SARA. Thank you — (*Looks in box*) What a lovely cake. (*Takes out same and puts it on table*) And mince pie — a chicken patty — and grapes — and oranges — and plum buns with sugar on — and crystallized fruit in an angel box and chocolate caramels.

BECKY. Chocolate camels — [*Arranging the goodies, etc., until table is quite decorated.*]

SARA. There.

ERMENGARDE. It's like a real party.

BECKY. It's like a Queen's table.

ERMENGARDE (*sudden thought*). Sara, do you ever pretend you are a princess now? [*Becky puts basket on bed, and chairs at table.*]

SARA. Oh, yes, I have to pretend it all the time. It helps me to be polite to people when they are rude to me. I'm a princess in rags and tatters, but I'm a princess inside.

ERMENGARDE (*suddenly*). I'll tell you what, Sara. Pretend you are a princess now, and that you are giving a banquet.

SARA. But it is your banquet — you must be the Princess, Ermy. We'll be your maids of honour.

ERMENGARDE. Oh, I can't — I'm too stupid — and I don't know how — *you* be her.

BECKY. Yes, Miss — go on, you be her.

SARA. Well, if you want me to —— (*Pause, — then suddenly*) But I've thought of something else —— (*Goes to fireplace*) Yes, there is a lot of paper and rubbish left in here. If we light it, it will blaze up for a few minutes, and we can pretend it's a real fire. If we only had more paper.

ERMENGARDE (*with sudden inspiration, running to books*). I know — books ——

SARA. No, no, don't tear the books, Ermy.

ERMENGARDE (*pause, then quickly*). The curl papers then. (*Runs to Sara, kneels before fire. Sara pulls papers off Ermy's head*) Oh, oh, they hurt.

SARA. By the time it stops blazing we shall forget it's not being real. (*Strikes light on box, starts fire. The three girls before it*) Doesn't it look real? Now we will begin the party —— (*From behind table*) Oh, girls — this — (*paper off a cake*) shall be my crown, and this my sceptre. (*Making spill of paper*) Advance, fair damsels, and be seated at the banquet table —— (*Sara sings*) Tra-la-la — tra-la-la —— (*Beats time with paper*) Take each other's hand and advance —— (*Becky not knowing how*) No, no; Ermy, show Becky how, you know — show Becky. (*Sings again*) Tra-la-la —— (*Becky and Ermengarde join hands and dance to music. Becky falls over books. Finally at end of strain both are in chairs, — all sit together*) My noble father, the King, who is absent on a long journey, has commanded me to feast you. (*Addressing air*) What ho, there —— (*Looking into mid-air. Ermy and Becky look puzzled, not understanding*) Minstrels, strike up with your viols and your bassoons. (*Ermengarde and Becky look puzzled. Sara explains to them, resuming her natural manner*) Princes always have minstrels at the feast. Pretend there's a minstrel gallery up there. (*Points up toward audience*) What ho there — strike —— (*Ermengarde and Becky stare at her in rapture, then jump to feet. Imitate trombone, humming "Johnny, get your hair cut." At end of song they sit*) Now we will begin.

THE LITTLE PRINCESS

Close your eyes tight now and fancy
How Grandmother looked when a girl,
With soft dimpled cheek and manners so sweet,
With her powder, patches and curl.
Suppose I pretend I am like her
With her quaint, dainty ways, at a ball, —
See the dance she is in — 'tis about to begin;
Can you fancy scene, costumes and all?

Suppose you were all at this old-fashioned ball,
Suppose, suppose, suppose —
Here's what you would see if you could be
Her guest at a dance of '73.

Suppose in a far-off country,
In the days of long ago,
You've entered the gate at the time of a fête
In a garden of Tokio.
Can you see the Japanese maidens
With their dainty figures so small,
See the dance they are in — it's about to begin.
Can you fancy scene, flowers and all?

Suppose you are hid in Snowflower's chair,
Suppose, suppose, suppose,
See their black heads bow low as they dance to and fro?
These quaint little geishas of Tokio?

Suppose in the fairies' country,
Where the moss makes a carpet green
Out under the trees with their rustling leaves
At the Court of the Elfin Queen,
You could hide yourself in a tree-top
And peep into Hazel Brush Hall,
See the dance they are in — 'tis about to begin.
See the Brownies, moonbeams and all?

Suppose you are there, unseen to the stare,
 Suppose, suppose, suppose,
 Here's what you would see if you could be
 A visiting sprite in the top of a tree.

[Door is thrown violently open. Enter Miss Minchin. Ermy dives under table. Becky cowers with cake in hand; afterwards puts cake back on table. Sara stands behind table with crown on.]

MISS MINCHIN. What does this mean?

ERMENGARDE (*under table*). It's a party.

MISS MINCHIN (*to Becky*). You audacious creature. You leave the house in the morning.

BECKY. Yes, mum.

ERMENGARDE. Don't send her away, please. My aunt sent me a box full of good things ——

BECKY. Yes, mum — an' we're only just 'avin' a party.

MISS MINCHIN (*witheringly*). So I see, with the Princess Sara at the head of the table. (*Turns on Sara*) This is your doing, I know — Ermengarde would have never thought of such a thing. You decorated the table, I suppose, with this rubbish. (*To Becky*) Go back to your garret. [*Becky crosses, steals off, face in apron.*]

MISS MINCHIN (*to Ermengarde*). Ermengarde, put those things in the hamper. (*To Sara*) As for you, I will attend to you to-morrow. You shall have neither breakfast, dinner nor supper!

SARA. I've had neither dinner nor supper to-day, Miss Minchin.

MISS MINCHIN. Then all the better. You will have something to remember. Don't look at me like that. (*Sara has not taken her eyes from Miss Minchin. To Ermengarde, after seeing her books on floor — Sara front of table*) Ermengarde, you have brought your beautiful new books into this dirty garret; pick them up and go back to bed. You will stay there all to-morrow, and I shall write to your papa. What would he say, if he knew where you are to-night?

ERMENGARDE. I don't know, Miss Minchin.

MISS MINCHIN. Take that hamper.

ERMENGARDE. Yes, Miss Minchin. (*Does so. Exits, turning at door*) Cat ——

[*Noise heard of her falling down stairs.*]

MISS MINCHIN (*turning on Sara fiercely*). What are you thinking of — why do you stare at me in that fashion?

SARA (*quietly*). I was wondering.

MISS MINCHIN. What?

SARA (*not pertly but sadly and quietly*). I was wondering what my papa would say if he knew where I am to-night.

MISS MINCHIN (*threateningly*). You insolent minx, how dare you! I will leave you to wonder. Go to bed at once. [*Exits.*]

SARA (*left alone, takes up Emily, sits on ottoman*). There isn't any party left, Emily — there isn't any princess — there's nothing left but the prisoner in the Bastille. (*Head down and cries softly*) I won't cry. (*To table with Emily*) I'll go to bed and sleep. I can't pretend any more to-night. (*Blows out candle*) I wish I could. (*Going to bed*) I'll go to sleep and perhaps a dream will come to pretend for me —— (*Take off shoes — in bed*) I'll suppose a little to make it easier. Suppose there was a bright fire in that grate — with lots of little dancing flames — suppose there was a soft rug on the floor and that was a comfortable chair — and suppose the attic was furnished in lovely colours —— (*Voice becomes dreamy*) And suppose there was a little table by the fire with a little hot supper on it — and suppose this was a beautiful soft bed with white sheets and fleecy blankets and large downy pillows — suppose — sup-p-ose — sup-po-se —— [*Falls asleep.*]

[*Ram Dass appears at window with three other lascars. He carries one dark lantern. Surveys the room, sees Sara asleep, raises window, enters with others, and without noise makes the trick change, bringing everything through window. First, three men help Ram Dass to clear away the old furniture. After furniture is cleared, Indian stuff is brought on and placed. At end of change three lamps are brought on. Ram Dass lays fire in grate and before lighting same stands with lighted taper in front of*]

grate which is signal for other lascars to light their lamps. Discovered, three lascars standing by their respective lamps with folded arms. Ram Dass then takes books from tray on table, puts them on cushions, and exits through window.

[Sara wakes slowly, sees the wonderful change and is bewildered.]

SARA. What a nice dream. I feel quite warm. *(Stretches out arms, feels blanket dreamily)* I don't want to wake up — *(Trying to sleep)* Oh, I am awakening. *(Opens eyes, sees everything — thinks she is dreaming)* I have not wakened. I'm dreaming yet. *(Looks around smiling, bewildered but waking)* It does not melt away, — it stays. I never had such a dream before. *(Pushes bedclothes aside, puts feet on floor, smiling)* I am dreaming, I'm getting out of bed. *(Closes eyes as she gets out, as if to prolong dream; then opens eyes)* I'm dreaming, it stays real — I'm dreaming, it feels real. *(Moves forward, staring about her)* It's bewitched, or I'm bewitched. *(Words hurrying themselves)* I only think I see it all. But if I can only keep on thinking it, I don't care, I don't care. *(Sudden outburst of emotion. Sees fire and runs to it)* A fire, a little supper. *(Kneels at fire — hands before it)* A fire I only dreamed wouldn't be hot. *(Jumping up, sees dressing-gown and slippers)* A dressing-gown! *(Holding it to face, then putting it on)* It is real — it is, it must be. It's warm, it's soft. *(Puts feet in slippers, cries out)* Slippers — they are real too. They are real, it's all real. I am not — I am not dreaming. *(Sees books on cushions. Runs to them)* Books, books — *(Opens one, turns over leaves rapidly)* Some one has written something. Oh, what is it? *(Runs to lamp. Reads aloud)* "To the little girl in the garret, from a friend." *(Clasping book to her breast, grabs up Emily and hugs her)* Oh Emily, oh papa — *(Kneels)* Papa, I have a friend, I have a friend!

CURTAIN

ACT III

SCENE. *Mr. Carrisford's study in house next door to Miss Minchin's seminary for young ladies. Room handsomely furnished. Window looks out on winter street. Chairs, bric-à-brac cabinet, curtains, with soft cushions on window seat, lady's writing-desk, fireplace with fire-dogs. A table with books on it, and a big armchair nearby. Oriental rugs on floor with a tiger's head rug for Donald. Large sofa beside baby grand piano. Noah's ark with animals in it.*

At the rise of curtain: Door opens. Enter Ram Dass, followed by Donald, Mazie, Nora, and Janet Carmichael. Ram Dass stands up stage. Donald with a whoop sits on tiger's head. Mazie and Nora to piano, to play with toys in ark.

JANET. Please tell Mr. Carrisford we can wait as long as he likes. We'll go away if he doesn't want us. We're only come to cheer him up a little.

RAM DASS. The Sahib will be glad. I go. [*Exits.*]

DONALD. I'll sit here on the tiger's head. Gee up — gee up — gee up! I'm on the tiger's head.

JANET. Now, Donald, you must remember. Mr. Carrisford has been very ill, and when you come to cheer up a person who is ill you don't cheer him up at the top of your voice.

DONALD (*riding tiger's head*). Well, I can cheer him up better when I'm sitting on the tiger's head than I can on a chair. Gee up — [*Falls off.*]

JANET. You can sit there, if you'll be quiet. (*Crosses and sits in chair*) Mr. Carrisford is very anxious to-day. He is waiting for papa to come back from Paris. Mamma said we might help pass the time for him — because he likes us when we're quiet. (*At piano with animals*) I'm going to be quiet.

MAZIE (*with her*). So am I.

DONALD (*riding tiger boisterously*). We'll all be as quiet as mice.

JANET (*to him*). Mice don't make a noise like that.

DONALD. A whole lot of mice might. A thousand mice might.

JANET (*severely*). I don't believe fifty thousand mice might.

And we have to be as quiet as one mouse. I'm the oldest

and I'm responsible. [*Mazie gets down from the piano, and pushes Donald off tiger's head on to the floor. He retaliates by pushing her off on to floor.*]

MAZIE. Oh, Donald, you are rough!

DONALD. You pushed me off, I pushed you off. [*Sits on tiger again.*]

JANET (*arranges pillows*). Now, that will be ready for him when Ram Dass brings him in, poor thing. (*Leans head on hands on table*) Oh dear, I wish papa would come. I do hope he will say he has found the lost little girl.

DONALD. Yes.

NORA. Perhaps he will bring her back from Paris.

DONALD. I wish he would. She could tell us about when her papa shot this tiger in India. Mr. Carrisford said Captain Crewe shot it.

MAZIE. I want her to be found because I want to play with her.

NORA. I want her to be found because I'm sorry for her.

JANET. I'm sorry for her. Perhaps she's a poor little beggar in the streets. She has no father and no mother, and Mr. Carrisford does not know where she is. He only thinks she was sent to a boarding-school in Paris. [*Donald throws animals into ark.*]

CHILDREN. Oh, ah, Donald!

NORA. Papa has been to ever so many schools to look for her.

MAZIE. But he could never find her.

JANET. But he went to Paris on Thursday because he heard of a school where there was a little girl whose papa died in India. If he doesn't find her this time, he says he shall not know what to do. [*Donald bangs the piano.*]

JANET AND MAZIE. Oh, Donald, Donald!

NORA. Oh, I wish it was time for him to come. (*To window*) Perhaps she is cold and miserable somewhere. And all the while, Mr. Carrisford wants her so much.

MAZIE (*tearfully*). Perhaps she's out in the wet in bare feet and torn frock. It makes me want to cry.

DONALD (*taking stage manfully*). I say, if papa doesn't bring her back from Paris, let's all go and look for her, — every

one of us. Let's go to the park and stand at the gate, and every time we see a little girl let's ask her what her name is.

JANET (*desperately*). We can't let her stay lost and be poor always when she ought to be so rich and live in such a beautiful house. I can't bear it.

[*Door opens. Enter Carrisford and Ram Dass. They cross to armchair.*

CHILDREN (*when they see him*). Oh, Mr. Carrisford, there you are! Oh, how do you do. [*Running to him and leading him down.*

CARRISFORD. How do you do, my dears; it's very good of you to come and see me.

CHILDREN. Oh, no!

NORA. We like to come.

JANET (*who has fixed pillows for Carrisford*). Mamma said we might come and see you on our way from the party.

MAZIE. We wanted to show you our party frocks.

DONALD. We're not going to make a noise. [*Blows whistle.*

CARRISFORD. Oh, dear me, let me see — how smart you all are.

Let me look at you. [*Donald struts, showing coat and pants.*

DONALD. Would you like to see the back? [*Showing it.*

NORA. Mamma lent me her locket.

MAZIE (*showing frock*). Mine is quite a new frock.

DONALD. I have four pockets. (*Showing them*) One, two, three — (*Loses fourth; suddenly finds it*) Ah, four.

CARRISFORD. I have only two.

DONALD. Oh, ho, he has only two!

JANET. Do you think you are any better, Mr. Carrisford?

CARRISFORD. I'm afraid not, Janet. I'm anxious and it isn't good for me. I shall be better if your papa brings me good news. Ram Dass, you may go. [*Exit Ram Dass.*

NORA. He won't be long now. When he comes from Paris, he always comes in the afternoon.

DONALD. I say, I'll go to the window and watch for the cab. Mazie, you come and watch too.

JANET. Mr. Carrisford, do you think he will come back and say he has found the lost little girl?

CARRISFORD. I hope so, Janet, I hope so. I shall be very unhappy if he does not.

NORA. Do you think that perhaps she is so poor that she is begging in the streets this very minute — while we are waiting for her to be found?

CARRISFORD (*startled and miserable*). I hope not — I hope not — Heaven knows what she may be doing. That is what makes me so miserable.

DONALD (*shouts from window*). Here's a cab, here's a cab —

ALL. Oh —

DONALD. I believe it's going to stop here. (*Carrisford rises, partly turns up stage. Nora and Janet rise*) Oh, no, it isn't, and there's only a fat old lady in it with a blue bonnet on. [*Carrisford sinks back into chair.*]

JANET. Oh, Donald, you must be careful.

DONALD. I was careful. It was a cab. The cabman looked at this house when the umbrella was poked out.

CARRISFORD (*pats Janet's hand*). You are a nice little girl, Janet. Thank you.

JANET (*kneels beside him*). I wish I could cheer you up until papa does come — but when anyone feels ill perhaps cheering up is too loud.

CARRISFORD. Oh, no, no —

JANET. May we talk about the little girl?

CARRISFORD. I don't think I can talk about anything else just now.

NORA. We like her so much. We call her the little lost Princess.

CARRISFORD. Do you, — why?

JANET. Because she will be so rich when she is found that she will be quite like a little princess. Is it true that her papa gave all of his money to one of his friends to spend in a mine that had diamonds in it — and then his friend thought he had lost all and ran away because he felt as if he was a robber?

NORA. But he wasn't really, you know!

CARRISFORD. No, he wasn't really. The mine turned out well

after all. But it was too late. Captain Crewe was dead. If he had lived he and his little girl would have been very rich indeed.

JANET. I'm sorry for the friend.

CARRISFORD. Are you?

JANET. I can't help it.

CARRISFORD. I am sorry for him too. *I am the friend, Janet.*

JANET. Oh, de-ar — *Poor Mr. Carrisford.*

NORA. Oh, papa must find her!

JANET. Yes, he must find her!

DONALD (*from window, dancing up and down in seat with Mazie*).

Here he is, here he is.

ALL. Oh, ah —

CARRISFORD (*trying to rise*). I wish I could get up, but it's no use, I cannot, I cannot — [*Nora and Janet to window.*

JANET (*coming down*). But there isn't any little girl. [*Enter Ram Dass.*

RAM DASS. Sahib, Mr. Carmichael is at the door.

ALL. May we go?

CARRISFORD. Yes, yes, go, go — [*Children exeunt running, followed by Ram Dass.*

CARMICHAEL (*outside*). No, no, children. Not now —

CHILDREN. Daddy, daddy —

CARMICHAEL. Not now, — you can come in after I have talked with Mr. Carrisford. Go away and play with Ram Dass.

CHILDREN. All right. [*Enter Carmichael.*

CARRISFORD (*shaking hands*). I am glad to see you — very glad. Pray sit down. What news do you bring?

CARMICHAEL (*sits*). No good news, I am sorry to say. I went to the school in Paris and saw the little girl. But she is not the child you are searching for.

CARRISFORD. Then the search must begin all over again.

CARMICHAEL. I'm afraid so.

CARRISFORD. Have you any new suggestions to make?

CARMICHAEL. Well, perhaps. Are you quite sure the child was put in a school in Paris?

CARRISFORD. My dear fellow, I am sure of *nothing*.

CARMICHAEL. But you thought the school was in Paris?

CARRISFORD. Because her mother was a French woman, and had wished that the child should be educated in Paris. It seemed only likely that she should be there.

CARMICHAEL. I assure you I have searched the schools in Paris thoroughly. The journey I have just returned from was really my last hope.

CARRISFORD. Carmichael, I must find her, — I shall never get well until I do find her and give her the fortune the mine has made. It is hers, and she, poor child, may be begging in the streets. Poor Crewe put into the scheme every penny he owned, and he died thinking I had ruined him.

CARMICHAEL. You were not yourself at the time. You were stricken with brain fever two days after you left the place — remember that.

CARRISFORD. Yes, and when I returned to consciousness, poor Crewe was dead.

CARMICHAEL. You did not remember the child; you did not speak of her for months.

CARRISFORD. No, I had forgotten, and now I shall never remember.

CARMICHAEL. Come, come. We shall find her yet. [*Rises.*]

CARRISFORD. We will find her if we search every city in Europe. Help me to find her. [*Shake hands.*]

CARMICHAEL. We *will* find her. As you say — if she is alive she is *somewhere*. We have searched the schools in Paris. Let us try London.

CARRISFORD. There are schools enough in London. By the way, there is one next door.

CARMICHAEL. Then we will begin there. We cannot begin nearer than next door.

CARRISFORD. There's a child there who interests me. But she is not a pupil. (*Enter Ram Dass*) She is a little forlorn creature as unlike poor Crewe as a child could be. Well, Ram Dass? —

RAM DASS. Sahib, the child, she herself has come — the child the Sahib felt pity for. She brings back the monkey who

had again run away to her garret. I have asked that she remain. It was my thought that it would please the Sahib to see and speak with her.

CARMICHAEL. Who is she?

CARRISFORD. God knows. She is the child I spoke of. (*To Ram Dass*) Yes, yes, I should like to see her. [*Children enter, except Donald, crying and dancing with joy.*]

JANET. Mr. Carrisford, Mr. Carrisford, papa, papa, the little girl, she's the little girl we saw at the school——

CARMICHAEL AND CARRISFORD. At the school?

NORA. She was quite a rich little girl in a beautiful frock.

MAZIE. And now she's poor and thin and ragged — at least almost ragged.

[*Enter Mrs. Carmichael.*]

MRS. CARMICHAEL. My dears, my dears, what are you talking about — all at once?

JANET. It's the little girl who made up names about us — and now she's quite poor and shabby.

MAZIE. She brought the monkey back.

DONALD (*runs on — joining clamour*). I say, I say, she won't come in, she won't come in, — I want her to come in! She talked Indian to Ram Dass, but she won't come in. [*During this he jumps behind Mr. Carrisford, pulls his bath robe — is taken away by his father.*]

CARRISFORD (*to Ram Dass*). She spoke Hindustani?

RAM DASS. Yes, Sahib, a few words.

CARRISFORD. Ask her to come here. [*Exit Ram Dass.*]

CARMICHAEL (*to Carrisford*). You must compose yourself. Remember your weakness. The fact that the child knows a little Hindustani may mean nothing. Don't prepare yourself for another disappointment.

CARRISFORD. No, no.

CARMICHAEL (*to Donald*). Here, you young rascal.

[*Spanking. Enter Sara with monkey in arm.*]

MRS. CARMICHAEL. I believe it is the same child, but I should not have known her.

SARA. Your monkey got away again. He came to my garret

window and I took him in last night. I would have brought him back if it had not been so late. I knew you were ill and might not like to be disturbed.

CARRISFORD. That was very thoughtful of you.

SARA. Shall I give him to the lascar?

CARRISFORD. How do you know he is a lascar?

SARA. Oh, I know lascars. I was born in India.

CARRISFORD (*excited*). Were you? (*Holds out his hand*) Come here. (*To Ram Dass*) Ram Dass, take the monkey away.

(*Exit Ram Dass with monkey. To Sara*) Come, you live next door, do you not?

SARA. Yes, sir, I live at Miss Minchin's.

CARRISFORD. She keeps a boarding-school. But you are not a pupil, are you?

SARA. I don't know what I am.

CARRISFORD. Why not?

SARA. At first I was a pupil and a parlour-boarder, but now ——

CARRISFORD. What now?

SARA. I sleep in the garret next to the scullery-maid. I run errands for the cook and I teach the little ones their lessons.

MRS. CARMICHAEL (*to Mr. Carmichael*). Poor little thing.

CARRISFORD (*gestures to Carmichael as if agitation was too much for him*). Question her, Carmichael, — I cannot.

CARMICHAEL. What do you mean by "at first," my child?

SARA (*turning to him*). When I was first taken there by papa.

CARMICHAEL. Where is your father?

SARA. My papa died. He lost all his money, and there was none left for me, and so ——

CARRISFORD. Carmichael!

CARMICHAEL (*pantomime with wife*). And so — you were sent up into the garret and made a little drudge? That's about it, isn't it?

SARA. There was no one to take care of me. I belong to nobody.

CARRISFORD (*breaking in*). How — how — did your father lose his money?

SARA. He didn't lose it himself. He had a friend he was very fond of — he was very fond of him — it was his friend who took his money. I don't know how. (*To Carmichael*) I don't understand. (*To Carrisford*) He trusted his friend too much.

CARRISFORD (*agitated*). But the friend might not have meant to do harm. It might have happened through a mistake.

SARA. But the *suffering* was just as bad for my papa. It killed him —

CARRISFORD (*faints*). Carmichael!

[*Confusion. Carmichael goes to Carrisford. Sara stands before them, bewildered; she picks up shawl and starts to go.*]

SARA. I think I had better go.

CARRISFORD (*recovering*). Stay. What was your father's name?

SARA. His name was Ralph Crewe —

CARRISFORD. Oh —

SARA. Captain Crewe — perhaps you knew him. He died in India.

CARRISFORD. Yes, yes, yes — Carmichael, it is the child!

SARA (*looking from Carrisford to Carmichael, trembling*). What does he mean? What child am I?

CARRISFORD. I was your father's friend — he loved me — he trusted me — if he had lived he would have known — but now — [Sinks back.

MRS. CARMICHAEL (*to Sara*). My dear little girl. My poor little girl!

[*Children start to go to Sara; Janet stops them.*]

SARA. Did he know my papa? Was *he* the wicked friend? Oh, do tell me!

MRS. CARMICHAEL. He was not wicked, my dear; he did not really lose your papa's money — he only thought he had lost it — he was ill — and when he got well — your poor papa was dead, and he didn't know where to find you.

SARA. And I was at Miss Minchin's all the time.

MRS. CARMICHAEL. Yes, he saw you pass by, and he was *sorry* for you, and he told Ram Dass to climb through your attic window and try to make you comfortable —

SARA (*joyfully*). Did Ram Dass bring the things, — did he tell Ram Dass to do it? Did he make the dream that came true?

MRS. CARMICHAEL. Yes — yes — my dear — he did. He is kind and good, and was sorry for you.

SARA (*going to Carrisford*). You sent the things to me — the beautiful things — the beautiful, beautiful things — you sent them?

CARRISFORD. Yes — poor dear child — I did.

SARA. Then it is you who are *my friend*. [*Kneels to Carrisford*].

SERVANT (*outside*). Pardon me, Madam, but Mr. Carrisford is not well enough to see visitors.

MISS MINCHIN (*partly off stage*). I am sorry (*enters door*) to disturb Mr. Carrisford, but I must see him at once. I have explanations to make. (*Meeting Carmichael*) I am Miss Minchin, the proprietress of "*The Young Ladies' Seminary*" next door.

CARMICHAEL. So you are Miss Minchin?

MISS MINCHIN. I am, sir.

CARMICHAEL. In that case you have arrived at the right time.

MISS MINCHIN. I have come to explain that an insolent charity pupil of mine has intruded here without my knowledge. [*Sees Sara*].

CARRISFORD (*to Sara*). There, there, it's all right.

MISS MINCHIN. You are here still — the forwardness of such conduct — (*indignantly*) go home at once — you shall be severely punished! Go home at once, at once!

[*Sara rises and starts to go*].

JANET. Oh, please don't let her go.

ALL CHILDREN (*going to Mr. Carrisford*). Oh, please don't let her go!

CARRISFORD. No, no — she is not going.

ALL CHILDREN. Ah ——

[*Children back to sofa*].

MISS MINCHIN. Not going! ——

CARRISFORD. No, Miss Minchin. She is not going *home* — if you give your house that name. Her home for the future will be with me.

MISS MINCHIN. With you, with you, — what does this mean?

CARRISFORD. That she is done with you, Madam, — with you and her misery and her garret.

MISS MINCHIN. I am dumbfounded. Such insults. (*To Sara*) This is your doing — come back to the school at once. [*Starts forward as though to take her.*]

CARMICHAEL (*coming down*). That will not do, Miss Minchin.

MISS MINCHIN (*violently*). Not do? How dare you interfere! (*To Carrisford*) How dare you? She shall go back if I have to call in the police.

CARRISFORD. The lady is too violent for me, Carmichael, — please explain to her.

CARMICHAEL. I am Mr. Carrisford's lawyer, Madam. Mr. Carrisford was an intimate friend of the late Captain Crewe — the fortune which Captain Crewe supposed he had lost is in the hands of Mr. Carrisford.

MISS MINCHIN (*startled*). The fortune — Sara's fortune? [*Turns, and stares aghast at Sara.*]

CARMICHAEL. It will be Sara's fortune — it is Sara's fortune now.

MISS MINCHIN (*to Carmichael*). Captain Crewe left her in my charge. She must return to it until she is of age. The law will interfere in my behalf.

CARMICHAEL. No, the law will not, Miss Minchin. Captain Crewe constituted Mr. Carrisford her guardian long ago. If Sara herself wishes to return to you, I dare say he would not refuse her. But that rests with Sara.

MISS MINCHIN. Then I appeal to Sara. (*To Sara*) I have not spoiled you, perhaps, but I have always been very fond of you.

SARA. Have you, Miss Minchin? I did not know that —

MISS MINCHIN. Yes. Will you not do your duty to your poor papa and come home with me?

SARA (*steps forward*). No, I will not. You know why I will not go home with you, Miss Minchin, you know — [*This spoken quietly, steadily, and politely, looking squarely at her.*]

MISS MINCHIN (*spitefully*). Then you will never see your little companions again, — Ermengarde and Lottie.

CARMICHAEL. Oh, yes, she will, she will see any one she wishes in her guardian's house.

[*Miss Minchin goes wrathfully to Carmichael.*]

CARRISFORD. Ram Dass — show this lady out. (*Miss Minchin makes for Carrisford*) That is all, Miss Minchin — your bill will be paid.

[*Miss Minchin looks around and, putting shawl over head, exits. Donald whistles.*]

CHILDREN (*delightedly*). Good-bye.

[*Ram Dass follows her off.*]

SARA (*goes toward Carrisford, drawing in breath; shuts eyes and then opens them wide with wondering expression, like waking from dream of night before*). I — I — did not wake up from the other — last — night — that was real. I shall not wake up from *this*, shall I?

CARRISFORD. No, no, you shall never wake up again to anything that is not happiness.

SARA. But there was another little girl — she was as lonely and cold and hungry as I was — *could* you save her too?

CARRISFORD. Yes, indeed. Who was she?

SARA. Her name is Becky — she is the scullery-maid. She has no one but me, and she will miss me so. She was the prisoner in the next cell.

CARRISFORD. You shall take care of her — Carmichael — (*who turns*) will bring back to us the prisoner in the next cell.

CHILDREN (*rushing around her*). You're found — you're found, — we are so glad you're found! [*All joyfully.*]

SARA. I didn't know I was lost, and now I'm found I can't quite believe it.

MRS. CARMICHAEL. What shall we do to make her feel that her troubles are over and that she may be happy as she used to be?

DONALD. I say, you said you would tell us a story. Tell us one now.

SARA. Shall I?

ALL. Yes, oh, yes, a story.

SARA. Just as I used to —— ?

CHILDREN. Just as you used to.

SARA. Well, —— once upon a time, long, long ago — there
lived a little Princess ——

CURTAIN

ABOUT THE SILVER THREAD

There is no one who knows more about how children's plays should be given than Constance D'Arcy Mackay. She has not only written all sorts of plays for all sorts of occasions — dramas and pageants and masques; but she has also prepared books of practical suggestions for costumes, music and scenery — in other words, she, as a settlement and community worker, has kept in touch with the drama demands of town and country, and has served as adviser for many patriotic celebrations. She occupied the post of Director of the Department of Pageantry and Drama in the War Camp Community Service (1918-1919).

Pictorially, her little plays lend themselves to excellent adornment. Her eye is drawn to the pageant, processional character of the "new" theater which democracy is feeling for. So that we find her plays pleasing, not alone to young people, but to grown folks as well. For instance, she writes me that "The Silver Thread" has graced the repertories of various Children's Theaters and Little Theaters, but has also been given by the students of Radcliffe and the University of Pittsburgh. In all she writes, she seems to be fully aware of the value of folk-lore and legend and history. Her foreword to "The Silver Thread" would indicate this.

Read Miss Mackay's "The Three Wishes", in her volume, "The Silver Thread and Other Folk Plays" (Holt), and compare it with Mrs. Williamson's version of a similar theme in this "Treasury."

THE SILVER THREAD

A CORNISH FOLK PLAY IN THREE ACTS

By CONSTANCE D'ARCY MACKAY

CAST

CUBERT, <i>a Miner Lad</i>	KING SHADOWCOB
DAME MORNA, <i>his Mother</i>	PRINCE SLUMPKIN
THE WOMAN FROM BEYOND THE HILLS	MOTTLESNOUT, <i>Lord High Chancellor</i>
THE PRINCESS GWENDA	TROLL,
KING RADNOR, <i>her Father</i>	KOLL
MABINA, <i>her Nurse</i>	RATKIN,
ALCIE, <i>another of the Princess's Attendants</i>	CLAWFOOT,
GUNDRED,	MOLE'S EAR,
THORWALD,	SHAG,
SOLBERG,	OTHER GOBLINS, CASTLE GUARDS, MAIDS-IN-WAIT- ING

} *Goblins*

TIME: *The mythical age.*

SEASON: *The Spring.*

PLACE: *A Kingdom West of the Moon and East of the Sun; yet not too far from the rock-bound hills of Cornwall.*

ACT I. SCENE I. Cubert's home on a late afternoon in Spring.

SCENE II. The Goblins' forge room.

ACT II. The Bedroom of the Princess. (The same night.)

ACT III. SCENE I. The Goblins' council hall. (The small hours of the following morning.)

SCENE II. Cubert's home as in Act I.

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THE SILVER THREAD

SOURCE

ALTHOUGH this play is partly founded on MacDonald's well-known fairy tale, it has its roots deep in Cornish soil, where the spriggans or goblins were said to live in the mines, and where, up to as late as 1869, the miners still believed in them and spoke of them as the "small people" or "knockers", the latter name being given them from the fact that strange sounds were heard in the mines at night, curious tappings which the miners attributed to the spriggans' picks. Lights also were seen moving about the dark passages of the mines — tiny lanterns carried by goblin fingers! Indeed, these eerie creatures dominate the greater part of Cornish folk-lore. That the spriggans had tunnels and lodes of their own was universally believed; else how account for the winding ways the miners sometimes came on, deep, deep underground? Often, too, queer, misshapen tools were found, such as mortals never work with. These may have accounted for the tappings the night shifts heard; for the goblins were reputed to sleep by day, and only commenced their labours when the shadows fell. Amidst the boulders of the dark and rock-clad hills of Morva many goblins were said to lurk. They were fond of working mischief to humans (so hearthstone stories ran!), and in this and many other ways closely resembled the trolls of Scandinavia.

STAGE SETTING

There are two ways in which the play can be produced. It may be given on the well-equipped stage of an assembly hall; or in the schoolroom itself. The larger production is the first one to be considered. While the stage directions call for three

sets of scenery, the play can readily be given with one. In this case the set for the Princess's room should have walls of some light and delicate tint, as pretty as possible. Then the rough side of the set can be turned for Cubert's home, as the boards and props will be quite appropriate for a meager dwelling. If this rough side of the scene is painted a weather-stained gray, it can be made to serve as a background for the goblin scenes by banking against it slabs and boulders fashioned of slate-coloured cambric tacked over boxes, etc. These slabs should as nearly as possible represent the kind of thing seen in professional photographers' rooms where "outdoor" pictures are taken. Indeed, a photographer might be induced to lend a few of these, which make a splendidly "stony" interior. The lights are, of course, turned very low for this set, to make it as dark as possible. The Silver Thread can be made of fine silver wire lifted into sight by nearly invisible black wires. For the schoolroom stage a hearth formed of wide dry-goods boxes, against which gray cambric is bulked to represent uneven stones, marked here and there with black and white chalk. Embers of scarlet tinsel, and red and black paper. A spinning-wheel made of two small-sized wagon wheels fastened to a wooden frame. A distaff with flax on it. The exit should be formed by screens covered with gray canvas or cambric. A gray curtain should be hung against the blackboard for a background, and against this should be fastened the full short chintz curtains that represent the windows. A screen with a painted scene on it for the vista glimpsed through the open doorway. When the play begins the blinds in the schoolroom should be lowered, and the candles lighted on the table of the miniature stage. The schoolroom bookcase may be used for the cupboard, and the schoolroom chairs and tables will form the rest of the furniture. A sheet of tin will make the thunder-crashes.

For the goblin scenes gray boulders formed of canvas should be grouped against the gray background. A forge fashioned from a dry-goods box painted black, with a shaped top of black cardboard. If red electric bulbs could be turned on for the

fire beneath it, they would greatly heighten the impression. If these cannot be had, scarlet tinsel must be again to the fore. The tools the boys will be able to fashion; the picks have broom handles, and the iron part may be made of cardboard. The torches fastened against the wall should be of gray cardboard, with tinsel and scarlet flames, shaped to a point.

For the Princess's bedroom scene a pretty dressing-table is required. Failing this, boxes draped in pale blue cambric. The bed, a narrow cot with a pale blue cambric cover. Pale blue hangings for supposed windows. On no account should plush or rattan chairs be used. Ordinary canvas-topped camp stools without a back can be covered in pale blue, and will take up less room than the average furniture.

For the entrance of the Woman from Beyond the Hills violin music should be played off stage. For the thunder of breaking waters the sheet of tin will come into requisition a second time.

This play has already been used in the schools for Group Reading as well as acting. For Group Reading the teacher reads the scene setting: Then the list of characters is read, and each student chooses (or has chosen for him) a part. To the lines of this part he adheres throughout the play, reading whenever it is his turn. In this way the play is taken as a lesson in English, the urge of the story as it gathers impetus making for clearer enunciation.

COSTUMES

CUBERT. Slate-gray knee-breeches, and a gray shirt, open at the neck.

DAME MORNA. A leaf-brown dress, ankle length, and a crossed kerchief of white.

THE WOMAN FROM BEYOND THE HILLS. A purple-gray dress—the purple-gray that is the colour of far-off hills. A cloak of the same, hooded. The material should be a soft woollen cloth.

PRINCESS GWENDA. When she first enters, a white woollen dress, ankle length, falling in straight folds from a square neck. A border of cloth of gold around the edge of dress, and at neck and sleeves. If handsome materials are out of the

question, white canton flannel and gold paper fastened to it, will serve. A cloak of rose red.

MABINA. Dark-green dress with square neck and full skirt, ankle length. Border of cream. Lace at throat and at elbow sleeves. A dark-green cloak. Pretty slippers and stockings.

ALCIE. Cream-coloured dress the same style as Mabina's, bordered in cherry colour.

KING RADNOR. A golden helmet (cardboard and gold paper). White plume. Long riding-cloak of purple velvet.

The goblins are in tight black goblin suits. All those who have speaking parts have some distinguishing mark; Mole's Ear has velvet ears; Ratkin has fur about his cap, and fur shoes. King Shadowcob has a gray beard, and a gold crown. Prince Slumpkin has a much smaller gold crown. The castle maids-in-waiting wear the plain robes with trains that are seen in all illustrated fairy tales (Grimm or Andersen). They should be of soft dull colours — greens, grays, blues.

The guards wear silver helmets and silver breastplates that join other bits of mail on the shoulders, running out towards the arm so as to give the shoulders great width (silver paper stitched to canvas). Cromwellian looking coats. Tall boots. The costumes are buff and silver.

THE SILVER THREAD

ACT I

SCENE I

Cubert's home. A clean and somewhat bare room, with smoke-stained walls and rafters.

At the left a cobbled fireplace, and above it a deal shelf on which are a few earthenware plates and cups, and a couple of pewter candlesticks. On the hearthstone below a bellows and tongs. Also an iron platter with dark bread cakes on it.

To the right, towards the background, a cupboard containing dishes. Its doors are closed. Towards the right foreground a spinning-wheel and chair.

In the background, toward the right, a door, giving on the outside. Towards the left a window, rudely latticed, and swinging inward. Between this window and the door the bare wall is hung with such tools as miners use, a boring awl, an old pick, a rusty lantern, etc.

In the center of the room a plain deal table, with a quaint deal chair. There is another chair of the same kind near the fireplace.

The door in the background is open. Through it can be seen a range of boulder-strewn hills and the towers of a castle in the distance. The light is that of late afternoon, swiftly deepening to twilight. At the rise of the curtain, Dame Morna is contentedly spinning. From outside comes the sound of someone singing. It is faint at first, and then grows clearer and stronger. Dame Morna raises her head and listens. She is a middle-aged woman and wears the dress of a peasant, with a crossed kerchief.

CUBERT (*without*):

“When the darkness gathers in the mountain glen,
Folks dare not go a-walking for fear of Little Men!

Goblins old and goblins young, clad against the weather
With skin of bat, fur of cat, and gray owl's feather."

DAME MORNA (*rising*). 'Tis Cubert's voice! What can have happened to bring him home so early?

CUBERT (*running in . . . a blithe, buoyant figure of a lad*).

Mother! (*Flings arm about her. Then laughs, releases her, and looks toward fireplace*) How good the cakes smell! What a wonderful mother to bake such wonderful cakes!

DAME MORNA. They must bake yet a little more, son Cubert. You are well before your hour.

CUBERT (*hanging up pick and lantern on wall, back*). That I am! Do I smell of gunpowder? The miners are blasting and they said I'd best be off. There's no work I can do till to-morrow, so here I am! (*Faint booming in distance*) That was a great blast! How the rocks must be flying! The goblins underground will be holding their ears.

DAME MORNA (*busying herself with testing and turning the cakes, which she finally places in cupboard, leaving a few for Cubert on the table as she passes*). Goblins, indeed! If the ugly creatures only stayed underground we'd have nought to complain of; but they are growing bolder and bolder. In my young days people seldom saw the goblins; yet now, as soon as twilight comes, they slip from their hiding-places in the hills, and crouch behind rocks and stunted trees, till it is hard to tell which is goblin and which is shadow. Last night, when I was coming back from neighbour Mertram's, I saw six of them sitting under the cleft of a big stone, and when I flashed my lantern on them they vanished. I wonder if it's the fine spring weather that's bringing them out in such numbers, or is it the progress the miners are making in the mine?

CUBERT. It can't be that, for the deeper we miners dig, the deeper the goblins burrow under us.

DAME MORNA (*at her spinning-wheel*). Aye, and the oldest miners in this district have never yet found the place where the goblins live.

CUBERT (*chuckling delightedly*). Not! It took the youngest miner of them all to discover that!

DAME MORNA (*turning quickly*). Cubert, you don't mean that you —

CUBERT (*sitting on the table and nibbling at cakes*). Indeed I do, mother. Listen. As I was running home to-day I heard the queerest sound like a whisper coming from under the earth. It was so strange that I laid my ear to the ground to listen, and, sure enough, there were the goblins, talking. Their voices came from a great distance under me, but I heard them say, "To-night" and "The castle!"

DAME MORNA. The castle! They dare not be planning mischief to the castle! What else did they say, Cubert?

CUBERT. That's all I heard, mother. After I've had my supper I'm going back to the same rock to find what it's all about. It will be quite dark by that time, and if I can move one of the stones without their guessing it, I can creep through and hear it all.

DAME MORNA. Be careful, Cubert. You know, the goblins hate the sunlight people, as they call all those who live above the ground. They're always ready to do the miner-folk a mischief.

CUBERT. And the castle-folk, too, it may be. They said "The castle." I wonder if the Little Princess knows about them?

DAME MORNA. How should she? The Princess is never out after nightfall, and 'tis not the custom of the great folk in the castle yonder to wander about the hills. I'll warrant there's none but the miners and the miners' wives and children who have ever seen the goblins or know anything at all about them. Even if the castle servants knew it, they would not dare to tell the Princess. His Majesty, King Radnor, would not thank them for frightening her little Highness.

CUBERT. Yet, if ill things are, sure 'tis better to know they are, and where they are. How did there ever come to be such things as goblins, mother?

DAME MORNA. 'Tis hard to tell, son. It all happened so long ago. But the wisest believe that the goblins were once crea-

tures more like us, loving sunshine and fresh air. But their deeds were evil. In order to rob and annoy folk they took to living in mountain caves, and from that it was only a step to living altogether underground. The years went on, and, because they lived in the dark and because their minds were hideous, their bodies grew warped and hideous, too, for the insides of things will aye shape their outsides.

CUBERT. How strange, then, mother, that good King Radnor lets the goblins roam at will.

DAME MORNA. I doubt if King Radnor knows or cares. He keeps to his castle. It is only those who live in the open who learn to see far off. And as for the goblins themselves, I fear there is no way in which we can be rid of them; for you cannot hurt or wound them. Their strange misshapen bodies are as hard as iron.

CUBERT. And there is no one who knows how to rule them?

DAME MORNA. I never yet heard certainly of anyone who had power over them, though some say ——

CUBERT (*as the music of The Woman from Beyond the Hills faintly begins*). Hark!

DAME MORNA. What is it?

CUBERT. When you said . . . “has power” . . . I thought . . . I heard . . .

DAME MORNA. Heard what?

CUBERT (*with face uplifted*). Music . . . music that I seem to have been hearing for a long time . . . strong, sweet music. Such music as they play before kings and queens when they go out into their kingdoms. . . .

[*The music swells gradually.*]

DAME MORNA (*turning*). What shadow is that across the doorway?

CUBERT. It is the shadow of an old woman. See! She is coming in.

[*The music swells louder and then stops. The Woman from Beyond the Hills enters, a mysteriously regal figure, for all that her dress is that of a peasant. Her hair is white; but her face*

is unlined. She wears a long gray cloak about her shoulders, whose hood half hides her face. She carries a tall staff.

THE WOMAN FROM BEYOND THE HILLS. Peace and strength unto all beneath this roof.

[*Dame Morna rises. She and Cubert regard The Woman for one second's time in utter amazement. Then Dame Morna regains her self-possession, and goes hospitably forward.*]

DAME MORNA. I thank you. Will you not sit and rest? (*Cubert hastens to bring forward the chair that is at table, center*)

You are a stranger. You must come from beyond the hills.

THE WOMAN (*seating herself*). I am never weary; but I will rest if it pleases you, Dame Morna.

DAME MORNA (*going back and forth from the cupboard*). Will you not taste our bread and goat's cheese? And here is a cordial I made last Autumn from mountain grapes. It is not well that one should cross our threshold unrefreshed, though, indeed, I know that this is but coarse fare.

THE WOMAN. It is sweeter than some I have eaten in palaces. The white bread of queens is often bitter to the taste.

CUBERT (*plucking at his mother's sleeve*). What means she?

DAME MORNA (*aside, much mystified*). I know not.

THE WOMAN. A grudging crust is dry on the lips, but that which is freely given warms the heart. You are wondering about me, Cubert, lad. Who am I, and why am I, your great eyes ask? Well, some say I know the ways of white magic, and some call me The Woman from Beyond the Hills, but names signify nothing, and are neither here nor there.

CUBERT. You call me "Cubert," and yet I have never seen you before.

THE WOMAN. Think back a little, miner's lad. 'Twas about this time last year when the river was rain-swollen, as it is now, that you stopped on your way homeward to help an old gray woman over its muddy banks.

CUBERT. I had forgotten.

THE WOMAN. But I have not forgotten. It was a good gift, the gift of kind help. I am come to-day to bring you a gift in turn.

DAME MORNA (*a trifle proudly*). My son wants no payment for serving those that need his service.

THE WOMAN. Yet he may take the love of those he serves, and the gift it gives.

[*Hands him a ring.*]

CUBERT. A ring! Oh, mother, look!

THE WOMAN. Aye, a ring. Whenever you are in danger or trouble, place that ring upon your finger, and it will show you where lies safety.

CUBERT. I thank you.

THE WOMAN. *Show* you safety, I said, not *bring* you to it.

CUBERT. I know. I must up and find my safety once I'm shown the way.

THE WOMAN. Aye, Cubert, and remember this: That which we flee from masters us in the end; but of that which we turn and face we are always master.

CUBERT. I'll keep my face to my fear. I'll not run. I will remember.

THE WOMAN (*rising*). And I will remember the lad who wears my ring and does not turn his back. Farewell.

DAME MORNA. Must you leave us so quickly?

THE WOMAN. Aye, for the twilight hour is nearly done, and there's a storm brewing. Look to it, Cubert, that when you wear the ring you obey the ring.

[*Exit.*]

CUBERT. Hark! the music! . . . It is playing before her as she goes! It is . . . (*Rushes to door*) Wait! No! She's gone! There's not a trace of her! Nothing but the evening mists rolling up from the valley. As for the storm she said was brewing, why, 'tis the clearest evening! The sky is just waiting for the stars to be lit.

DAME MORNA (*lighting candles*). Come in, Cubert, and close the door. 'Tis almost supper time, and the air is chill these Spring nights. I shivered as she stood there; I shivered as she went.

CUBERT (*doing as he is bid*). Do you believe what that strange old woman said about the ring?

DAME MORNA. How can I tell? There's wisdom that's not our wisdom, Cubert, and there are things beyond our seeing that we must yet believe in. A moment ago you said there was no storm in sight. Look again.

CUBERT (*at window*). Why, the sky is full of dark clouds and the wind's rising. And last year's leaves are scurrying by with a rustle like goblin footsteps. 'Twas true, then. She can read even the storms, that strange Woman from Beyond the Hills. Was it not wonderful, my mother, that she should leave so quickly? Indeed, I cannot tell what way she took; for there, before me, is the winding hillside road on which the King always rides when he comes home to his castle, and there's not a traveler on it, though I can see it plain.

DAME MORNA. Draw the window, Cubert. My heart, what a gust that was! (*A clap of thunder sounds without*) I pity all those out in such a tempest!

[*A knock at the door.*]

CUBERT (*running to open it*). Perhaps it is she again!

[*The latch catches, but, after a moment's delay, the door is opened. Mabina and the Princess Gwenda enter as if propelled by the violence of the storm. The Princess is a very dear and charming little girl, quaintly dressed. Mabina is quite evidently tart and self-important.*]

MABINA. Would you keep us waiting all night in the rain? That's a fine way for beggarly miner-folk to treat the Princess.

DAME MORNA (*dumfounded*). The Princess!

GWENDA (*with pretty eagerness*). Indeed, indeed you didn't keep us waiting, and perhaps the latch was heavy. Some of the castle bolts are very hard to lift, I know. I've heard Thorwald say so.

MABINA. Thorwald, indeed! Come to the fire, your Highness, and dry your cloak, if this miner lad will give us leave to pass!

[*Glares at Cubert.*]

DAME MORNA. Cubert, my son, let women have all the room they wish. I have taught you so.

GWENDA (*seated at fire*). Thank you, Cubert, and thank you, too, Cubert's mother. You are very kind.

MABINA (*haughtily*). Kind! What else should they be! It's an honour to them to have you! What would the King, your father say, if he could see you sitting by a hearth like this?

GWENDA. He'd say I was lucky to find such a hearth, after you broke his commands by letting me be out so far from the castle after dark.

MABINA (*half whimpering*). Your Highness knows that I lost the way, else your Highness would be home, safe and sound, this minute. Besides, no one saw us leave the castle, so we'll not be missed.

GWENDA. That's all the worse, Mabina. Now none will hunt and find us.

CUBERT. Will your Highness taste a little of my mother's spiced cordial? 'Twill make you feel warmer and stronger after your wanderings.

GWENDA (*quelling Mabina's objections with a look*). Thank you, Cubert! (*Sips it*) It's very good. And I've been so cold and frightened.

CUBERT. Frightened?

GWENDA. We couldn't find the road, and the way was so rough, and, as night came on, queer shadowy things looked at us from behind the rocks.

MABINA. Nonsense, your Highness.

GWENDA. It wasn't nonsense, Mabina. I saw them with my own eyes, and I heard them talking together, and one of them spoke my name.

CUBERT. It must have been the gob —

[*Sees his mother's warning look, and checks himself.*]

MABINA (*dryly*). Your Highness shouldn't be afraid of the dark.

GWENDA. I'm not afraid of the dark, Mabina. *You know that*; but I am afraid of — (*With a cry*) Oh, there's one now! One of those dark shadowy things that followed us. It's looking in the window!

[Goblin promptly vanishes, just as Cubert starts toward the window, pick in hand.

MABINA. Her Highness is so nervous and exhausted she doesn't know *what* she sees. Come, Princess, drink a little more of the spiced cordial; and then, as soon as your coat and shoes are dry, we'll start for the castle.

[Mabina busies herself at fire, holding the cloak near the glow to warm it, while Cubert and the Princess talk.

CUBERT. And I'll go with you as far as the castle gates, I and my miner's lantern.

GWENDA (*looking at it with interest*). Is that it? I've often longed to see a miner's lantern. Things men work with are so wonderful to a Princess.

CUBERT. Not half so wonderful as a Princess is to men who really work.

GWENDA (*wistfully*). I wish you could see me oftener, Cubert. I'm sometimes very lonely at the castle. I have no mother, as you have, and there's no one young to talk to in all the great house.

CUBERT. But how can I come to see you, Princess, when I am only a miner boy, and you are a Royal Highness?

GWENDA (*innocently*). What difference can that make, Cubert? (*Looking with interest at his tools*) Is that your pickax? I've often heard my father say that without a pickax there would be no crown.

CUBERT (*pleased*). Does your father say that?

GWENDA (*looking straight before her, and talking very earnestly*). He says that a pickax means more than any scepter; because things men work with are wonderful and splendid.

CUBERT (*delightedly, looking at his pickax*). Then I've a scepter . . . and a ring!

GWENDA. A ring?

CUBERT. It was given me to-day by a strange old woman who called herself The Woman from Beyond the Hills. And she said, if ever I were in danger, to keep my face towards my fear, and that the ring — her ring — would show me the way to safety!

MABINA (*turning from fire, cloak in hand*). Your Highness's cloak is dry at last, the storm is cleared, and 'tis time we were going.

[*The Princess puts on her cloak, and then, attracted by Dame Morna's wheel, goes over to it. They talk in pantomime. Cubert and Mabina are by the fire.*]

MABINA (*snappishly*). You need not light your lantern, young sir, for we shall not need your assistance.

CUBERT (*quietly lighting his lantern*). Perhaps you'd prefer the goblins' company to mine.

MABINA (*contemptuously*). Goblins! (*With an apprehensive glance at Gwenda*) S-sh! Don't let the Princess hear you! She's frightened enough, as it is, of every shadow we've seen along the way. Goblins, indeed! There's no such thing in the world. Why don't you put up your lantern, miner's boy?

CUBERT. Because I and my lantern are needed, so, whether you like it or not, I'm going to see the Princess safely to the castle gates. (*To Gwenda*) Come, your Highness.

GWENDA. Good night, Dame Morna.

DAME MORNA. Good night, Princess.

GWENDA. May I truly say good night, dear mother of Cubert? May I kiss you?

DAME MORNA (*moved*). With all my heart! (*Kisses her*) Good night, and Heaven keep you, lonely little girl!

[*Exeunt Gwenda and Mabina.*]

DAME MORNA. You're going, Cubert?

CUBERT (*lingering*). As far as the castle gates, my mother. And, after that, a-visiting the goblins. I must know what's afoot to-night.

DAME MORNA. Remember your ring, Cubert.

CUBERT. Yes, Mother. And I'll face my fear! Coming, Princess!

[*Exit.*]

DAME MORNA (*looking after them*). Blessings on her gentle little Highness, and on my own dear boy!

[*The faint mysterious music of The Woman from Beyond the Hi's sounds as the curtain falls.*]

SCENE II

An hour later. The Goblins' forge room. A vaulted underground chamber of stone, the walls and background of which are jagged rock.

At the left, towards the foreground, a jutting boulder, sloping to a point large enough to hide from view anyone crouching or standing behind it. Toward the left background the rocks divide and form a passageway through which the Goblins enter and reenter.

In the center of the stage a rude forge with embers aglow beneath it.

The curtain rises on a scene of great animation. Goblins are swarming to and fro across the stage, while Troll hammers at the forge on what look to be grotesque imitations of miner's tools. The shadows of the Goblins leap fantastically in the red fire-glow. They are eerie creatures, with active, twisted bodies, and faces curiously gnarled and old. For a moment after the curtain rises there is no sound save the ringing blows on the forge. All the rest is in pantomime. As soon as the tools quit the forge the Goblins hurry off, left, with them.

TROLL (*at forge*). Bring me the bellows, Ratkin! Be 'quick with the picks, Mottlesnout! Hurry! Skurry! This is no time for idling. Since we have no tools such as miners use, we must weld our own. (*Hammers fiercely for a moment, and then pauses*) King Shadowcob will be here presently to see how the work goes forward, and it will be ill for us if he finds our hands are lagging or our tools unmade.

KOLL. My pick will bear his Majesty's inspection!

MOTTLESNOUT. My crowbar would rend a granite wall!

RATKIN (*yawning*). My arms ache with hammering, and the heat of the fire makes me drowsy.

[*He sits sleepily at left foreground, leaning against the rocky wall.*]

KOLL. I don't wonder he's drowsy, he's such a glutton. There's not a goblin dainty that he can ever let pass.

[*Goblins laugh. Troll continues to hammer briskly, in pantomime. Koll goes to right foreground, where a group of Goblins*

have paused a moment to glance at Mole's Ear, who is busily employed with a large flagon and a fantastic goblet. Into the flagon he is squeezing grapes.

KOLL (*briskly*). What are you doing, Mole's Ear?

MOLE'S EAR. Making wine, my brother, goblin wine. Fen grapes have I used and the slimy roots of things that grow beneath the ground. And many another thing that thrives in the dark, my brother. 'Tis a rare draught. At times of ceremony we shall use it.

KOLL (*crossing to where Clawfoot in the extreme left foreground is showing to another Goblin a darkly glittering throne robe*).

What are you doing, Clawfoot

CLAWFOOT (*indicating first a small loom which the Goblin who was talking to him holds, and then proudly holding up the robe*).

Weaving a throne robe, my brother, spangled with crystals that lie where underground springs run blackly. (*Turns robe so that it catches new glimmers of light from the forge fire*) Does it not shimmer darkly? It is a robe of state!

[*Goblins with robe and goblet disperse. The forge remains the center of activity.*]

RATKIN (*starting from his drowsy posture*). I hear the sound of someone moving stones up above us!

TROLL (*ceasing his pantomimic hammering*). Teach your ears better wisdom, Ratkin. (*Ratkin begins to work bellows*) 'Tis but the rushing of the river swollen by the Spring rains, or some belated miner wandering above ground with his lantern, and little dreaming what merry work is a-doing beneath his thick heels.

[*The hammering begins again, loudly, with pauses of utter silence during which can be heard the strokes of Cubert's pick up above.*]

KOLL (*to Goblins in background*). Faster! Faster! Rest not an instant. The King will soon be here.

TROLL (*at forge*). Blow the sparks for me, Ratkin!

RATKIN. Let Mottlesnout hold the bellows. I am so weary I can no longer move my arms.

[*Flings himself by rock, left, and dozes.*]

TROLL. Take his place, Mottlesnout, and let him rest; for he has served us well.

MOTTLESNOUT. I wish we had the arts of those hateful miner-folk. Then our picks and crowbars would be as fine as theirs.

KOLL. Patience, Mottlesnout. Our time is coming.

[Enter Slumpkin, left.

TROLL (*seeing him*). Come, blow the sparks for me, Slumpkin. Where have you been so long?

SLUMPKIN. Out on the hills, Troll, out on the hills. The Princess strayed from the castle and lost her way. We followed her, Shag and I; but she fled from us and called us dreadful shadows.

TROLL (*with malicious delight*). She'll feel the hands of us shadows presently.

MOTTLESNOUT. Aye, that she will!

KOLL. Why didn't you seize her, Slumpkin, and carry her off?

SLUMPKIN. Above ground? With the miner-folk likely to appear at any moment? I am not such a fool as that, good Troll; not I! What a wise goblin steals is stolen by night, and silently. The sunlight people love the brightness of the day, but we are of the dark, and in the dark our deeds thrive best.

MOTTLESNOUT. Aye, for none know of our deeds save the rats in the castle cellars, and the rats are dumb!

KOLL (*coming down from the back of the stage*). Goblins, our King is coming at last!

ALL. The King!

[General tumult of preparation.

TROLL. Drop work and let us meet him.

MOTTLESNOUT. Aye, let us give him the greeting he deserves! Come, Ratkin!

[Rouses the sleeping Goblin.

RATKIN (*following staggeringly as he rubs his eyes*). Even in my sleep I heard the sound of someone moving rocks up above us! [The Goblins rush out, left, leaving their tools behind them. A moment later Cubert forces his way through an opening in the

rock, at left foreground, and, running to the center of the stage, looks about him wonderingly.

CUBERT. Is this, indeed, the place? (*Looks up*) So dark! So dim! (*Runs, peering right and left*) And with so many winding passages! How strange and still it is! And how the shadows dance! Here are the Goblins' tools; but where are the Goblins? There's not a sign of them, and yet this is their forge room, I know, for only a moment since I heard them hammering and talking.

MOTTLESNOUT (*speaking in the passage, left*). Way for his Majesty! Room for King Shadowcob!

CUBERT. Hark! I hear them coming!

[He runs behind boulder that juts into the right foreground, and crouches there, perfectly screened from view. King Shadowcob enters from left background, attended by all the Goblins grotesquely bowing and capering.]

TROLL (*as Goblins bring tools for inspection*). Behold our work, your Majesty! Not a pick but what is as sharp as hand can make it; not a crowbar or gimlet but what is ready to work your will, and teach the castle-folk the meaning of goblin cunning.

KING SHADOWCOB. Well spoken, Troll, and like a true earth child. Goblins, is all in readiness?

KOLL. All is in readiness, your Majesty. Our labours are at an end. The secret passage which we have hewn through the rocks and which leads from our council hall to King Radnor's castle, is at last complete, and to-day, while the Princess roamed the hills, our valiant Mottlesnout made an opening in the wall of her room.

CUBERT (*in an outraged voice, the cry escaping from him*). Oh!

KING SHADOWCOB (*turning*). Who spoke?

KOLL. 'Twas nought but Ratkin, your Majesty. He is always drowsing and talking in his sleep.

KING SHADOWCOB (*indignantly*). This is no time for slumber! Now or never we must act, and act quickly. King Radnor is away, the miners are weary with blasting, and the foolish castle-folk unmindful of what we Goblins plan. Shoulder



THE SILVER THREAD

Act I. Scene ii

Cubert.—“Hark! I hear them coming!”

your tools, and let us make what speed we can to our council hall, and from thence to the castle cellars. There we will wait our time till the clock strikes midnight —

KOLL (*half-breathless with delight*). And then —

KING SHADOWCOB. Then we will creep like rats up from the castle cellars through the castle tower, push back the panel that leads to the room of the Princess, and her Royal Highness will be ours.

RATKIN. Aye, but what if the King's guards should discover us?

KING SHADOWCOB (*frowning*). A foolish question, Ratkin. There's not a guard that knows of the secret panel we have cut, and only goblins or moles could crawl through the passage we have made. (*As he speaks Goblins gather round him*) And if more than goblins or moles crawl through, have we not a remedy? The river is higher this Spring than ever before. Already it has overflowed its banks. Even now, if you listen, you can hear it rushing up above you. If courtiers or miners should follow us, we will break in the walls of our secret passage, and the water from above will rush in and fill it. The river will sweep through our tunnel to the castle cellars. It will fill even our council hall. The entrance to this forge room might be found; the entrance to our council hall is past mortal finding!

RATKIN. Aye, but what of us, if the river should enter the hall?

KING SHADOWCOB (*impatiently*). Are there not caverns far beneath that hall where we can hide in safety till those who hunt for us are drowned?

MOTTLESNOUT. True, true, your Majesty!

KOLL. Ratkin talks like a blinking owl!

SLUMPKIN (*suddenly breaking silence*). I would liefer have an owl than her Royal Highness.

KING SHADOWCOB (*glowering at him*). When she is old enough you are to marry the Princess.

SLUMPKIN. But, father, the Princess is not sweet or comely. I would I might marry someone beautiful — as we are!

KING SHADOWCOB (*angrily*). You'll marry whom I say, or it will be the worse for you. The Princess is the wife for you, and none other. It is she who will teach us all the arts of the sunlight people, so that, in the end, we shall be as powerful as they. Some day you will rule over your own kingdom, and theirs, too

TROLL. Your Majesty, I've heard that the sunlight people are very soft-hearted. When they are sorrowful, salt-water trickles out of their eyes. What of the little Princess?

KING SHADOWCOB. Who will hear her cries, once she is safely underground? The castle-folk will clamour and search in vain! Our revenge will be complete. Day by day we are driven deeper into the earth; but the sunlight people have not reckoned with goblin cunning. The King's miners burrow into our dwelling, but we shall burrow into the King's!

ALL GOBLINS (*fiercely jubilant*). Aha!

KING SHADOWCOB. Come, Goblins! The hours fly fast! Bring torches, Mottlesnout! Go, Slumpkin, and lead the way! Carry your pick, Ratkin, lest the passage be over-narrow. Leave your forge fire, Troll. We shall not need its embers. Onward, good Goblins, onward! This night the Princess shall be ours.

[*Exeunt all the Goblins, left.*]

CUBERT (*clambering with all haste from his hiding-place*). Yours? Never while I have a tongue to speak, or a foot on which to stand!

CURTAIN

ACT II

The bedroom of the Princess Gwenda, luxurious in pale blue. Panels of dark wood. In background, towards right, dark panels running half the length of the room. Towards the left a long narrow window, latticed and swinging inward. On each side of it hangings of pale blue brocade reaching from floor to ceiling. The window is open, giving a glimpse of a fine moonlit night. Dark hills are etched against the sky.

Near the wall, left, a canopied bed, very quaint and narrow. Its head is towards the window. On the floor before it a white fur rug. At the foot of the bed a door leading into other rooms of the castle. Near the door a dressing-table with silver boxes, a jeweled hair-brush.

At the right another door opening into the room beyond. Against the right wall, near foreground, a carved seat.

Suspended from the ceiling, right, a beautifully hammered gong.

At the rise of the curtain Alcie and Mabina are turning down the coverlet and straightening the silver boxes on the dressing-table, on which candles are a-gleam. Alcie is a pretty pink-cheeked maid-in-waiting, quite evidently in awe of the imperious Mabina.

ALCIE (*pausing by window*). 'Tis a fine moonlit night after the rain, and I can see Thorwald, the guard, pacing to and fro in the courtyard beneath me, and beyond him the trees of the garden. How the river is rushing down the mountain after the storm! It must be near to overflowing its banks; for I can hear the sound of it from here. (*Leaves window*) Where were you during the shower, Mabina?

MABINA (*haughtily*). Where should I be?

ALCIE. I could not find you, although I looked for you and the Princess high and low.

MABINA. The castle has more rooms than one, and people are always to be found by those who use their eyes. Have you laid out her Highness's sleeping-wrap? 'Tis long past her Highness's bedtime.

ALCIE. And she seemed tired to-night, the dear little Princess! She looked quite flushed as she ate her supper, and she asked me the strangest questions.

MABINA (*uneasily*). Questions?

ALCIE. She wanted to know if I had ever been beyond the castle gates at nightfall, and if I had ever seen queer shadowy creatures following me as I went. 'Tis some strange idea she has got from having no other children to play with, and truly this castle is a lonely enough place with King Radnor ever traveling to other parts of his kingdom that he

may see justice done to all his subjects equally. It's small wonder that the little Princess has such curious fancies.

MABINA. And you listened to her fancies, Alcie? There are some that will never learn wisdom!

ALCIE (*humbly*). I am sure I did not mean ——

MABINA (*witheringly*). Did not mean! Take this candlestick, Alcie, and look where you are going! (*Exit Alcie, left*)

Didn't mean! (*Airily*) Unless I stay by the Princess every moment, these maids-in-waiting will be putting more fancies into her head by listening to the ones she has already.

[*Exit Mabina, left, just as Cubert bursts in, right, and darts behind hangings at window, Gundred, Thorwald and Solberg hard at his heels. During the ensuing colloquy the space at left gradually fills with listening castle-folk, maids-in-waiting and men-at-arms.*]

GUNDRED. He went this way, I tell you!

THORWALD. Aye, I saw him myself. (*Pulls back curtain, and wrenches Cubert into the middle of the room, where the miner lad, slender and young as he is, seems all the more boyish as compared to the broad-shouldered guards who surround him*) Stand forth, young miner, or now that I hold you it will go hard with you.

[*Mabina and Alcie, alarmed at the clamour, enter from left, Alcie taking the precaution to close the door behind her.*]

MABINA. Would you rouse the castle with your uproar? What is the meaning of this?

THORWALD (*shaking Cubert*). It means that this young whelp of a miner's boy has returned a second time. Once before I bade him begone, and sent him from the castle gates, but now he returns and forces his way into the very castle itself. He says that he must see the Princess, and talks to us wildly of Goblins and council halls.

ALCIE. Who ever heard the like!

GUNDRED. The boy is crazed.

CUBERT (*passionately*). 'Tis you who are crazed, because you will not listen. I tell you that this very night the Goblins mean to steal the Princess. They have hewn a passage into

the castle cellar — a passage that leads to the Princess's very room.

SOLBERG. I said his brains were misty! For though 'tis rumoured that after nightfall the mines are filled with strange misshapen creatures, they'd never dare approach so near the castle.

THORWALD. The miner lad talks folly. 'Tis some strange dream he has had while working underground.

CUBERT (*beseechingly to Mabina*). Oh, speak for me! You know I would not lie!

MABINA. Indeed, I know nothing of the sort!

CUBERT (*imploringly to guards*). Oh, will you not listen! 'Tis but a short time since I left the Goblins' council hall, and heard them plotting.

THORWALD (*brusquely*). Enough! 'Tis plain to see that the lad has lost his wits.

MABINA. Aye, and a fine sight he'd be if the Princess should come in suddenly and find him here! What more you have to say can be said to him below in the courtyard. I'll not have her Highness disturbed by a roomful of people, each talking louder than the other.

CUBERT (*imploringly, as Gundred lays hands on him*). If you will not believe me, let me but speak to the Princess — only one word.

MABINA. You've said words in plenty, and great good they have done! (*Haughtily, to the guards*) Will you be off to the courtyard, or shall the King know how his guards wrangle in the Princess's room?

SOLBERG. Gently, gently, Madam Wasp's Nest! We meant no wrong! Look to the lad, Gundred, and see that he does not escape us a second time. Let the night-watch keep him in the courtyard till daylight comes. The dawn will cool his fever.

[*The guards during Solberg's speech have taken Cubert through the door at right, although he protests in passionate dumb show. The castle-folk exeunt right and left, and Mabina and Alcie are left alone.*]

ALCIE (*standing by the window, and speaking half-uneasily*).

What if it were truth that the lad spoke, Mabina? All the miner-folk believe that there are goblins.

MABINA. Are we miner-folk to listen to such tales? Where is the lad now?

ALCIE (*at window*). They have brought him to the courtyard.

He is standing there now, with his face turned towards this window.

MABINA. 'Tis a light punishment, that, to be kept there in the courtyard. But 'twill teach him a lesson when he stands there all the hours through.

ALCIE. I wonder if —

MABINA (*as a step is heard outside the door at left*). Hush! Here's the Princess.

GWENDA (*entering, left, a pale blue silken robe over her night-robe, pale blue slippers*). Are you and Alcie alone? A moment ago I thought I heard several voices.

MABINA. It might have been the guards, your Highness. They were talking outside in the hall. (*In alarm as Princess moves towards the window*) Come from the window, your Highness, the night air is chill.

[*Exit Alcie, left.*]

GWENDA. But the outdoors is so wonderful, Mabina, with the dew and the darkness, and the night wind sighing in the trees. Oh, how I wish I lived in a little house like Cubert's, and not in this great lonely castle.

[*Sits to have her hair brushed.*]

MABINA (*practically*). Then you couldn't be a Princess, your Highness.

GWENDA. Oh, yes, I could, Mabina. My father says that every little girl is a Princess — every little girl who tries to be gentle and courteous and kind. It isn't what she wears on her back that makes her a Princess: it's what she wears in her heart. And since Cubert has a kind heart, and is always trying to do things for other people, he is really a Prince, just as much as I am a Princess, don't you see?

MABINA. No, I *don't* see, and I must say that I think what your Highness is saying sounds like great nonsense.

GWENDA. Ah, that's what you said about those queer shadowy things that followed us after sundown, and yet I saw them as plainly as I see you.

MABINA. Don't speak of shadows, your Highness. If you think of them, you'll be apt to dream.

GWENDA. Oh, no, I won't, Mabina. And, besides, I'm not afraid. Nothing could reach me here. And then there is the great gong over by the wall. I've only to strike that and all the castle-people will come running.

MABINA (*more gently*). So they will, dear Princess. I had forgotten that.

GWENDA. I only wish, Mabina, that my father would come home to-night. He's been away so long, and it's almost time he was back again. You know he often travels by moonlight. If he does come, you'll be sure and call me, won't you, Mabina?
[*Getting into bed.*]

MABINA. Yes, your Highness.

GWENDA. No matter how late it is?

MABINA. No matter how late it is.

GWENDA (*yawning*). That's a good Mabina. Oh, I am so sleepy!

MABINA (*really sweetly for her*). Would your Highness like me to sit by you?

GWENDA (*very drowsily*). Why, no, of course not, Mabina. Won't — you — be — near — me — in — the — next — room — ?

[*Falls asleep.*]

MABINA (*laying out shoes and stockings*). And which will she want to wear to-morrow, I wonder. Her green gown, or her blue? Princess! (*A little louder*) Princess! She's so fast asleep she doesn't even hear me! She'll rest soundly after her long wandering this afternoon. (*Yawns*) Well, 'tis almost midnight, and the rest of the castle is a-bed. 'Tis time I was dreaming (*stretches*) as soon as I have seen Alcie, and laid out the Princess's gowns.

[Blows out candles, taking one with her as she exits left. The Princess sleeps. Moonlight steals in the window, flooding the room with faint radiance. A pause. A Goblin pushes back a panel of the wall in the right background, and peers cautiously in. Then he enters on tiptoe, and, as he lifts his face in the moonlight, it is seen that he is Ratkin. In the panel behind him stands Mottlesnout.]

MOTTLESNOUT. Is it sure she's asleep?

RATKIN. Quite sure.

MOTTLESNOUT *(cautiously entering)*. And there's no one stirring?

RATKIN. No one.

KING SHADOWCOB *(appearing at panel, entering, and then directing Goblins who follow him)*. Quickly, there, to your work. Keep guard, Slumpkin.

[The Goblins quickly surround the bed, and lift up the Princess, who lies on a slip mattress placed over the real one. As this slip mattress is carried down the passage, the little Princess looks very small and huddled. She sleeps soundly and does not waken. Troll lags behind. Ratkin reappears through panel.]

TROLL. Is all safe, Ratkin?

RATKIN. All's safe, and the Princess has not yet wakened.

TROLL. What will she do for more clothes?

[Shag reappears from panel.]

RATKIN *(directing Shag)*. There are more on that chair. A dress and a cloak. Go take them.

[Shag steals up to chair, left, just as Mabina enters by the left door, shielding her candle-flame with her hand, and not looking towards the bed.]

MABINA *(speaking over her shoulder to Alcie)*. Tread softly, Alcie, and make no noise! *(Draught blows out candle)* What's the ——

[Hears rustle by bed, where Shag is trying to creep by unnoticed. Turns, facing door left, sees him, shrieks, drops candlestick, in momentary terror claps hands across her eyes as if to dispel the vision. Meanwhile Ratkin and Troll disappear through panel, Shag rushing madly after them.]

MABINA (*shaken with terror*). Oh, it was something alive, it was something more than a shadow! (*Looks towards bed*) Her Highness! Where is her Highness? (*Alcie enters as Mabina runs to gong and begins to strike it*) Oh, rouse the guardsmen!

ALCIE (*also terrified*). What is it, Mabina?

ATTENDANTS (*entering hurriedly left*). What is it?

MABINA (*wildly, as the stage fills with clamour and excitement*).

The boy spoke truth! The boy spoke truth! The Goblins have stolen the Princess! There — there is the panel by which the Goblins entered!

THORWALD (*excitedly*). There is, indeed, an opening! It gives beneath my touch. The torch, there, Gundred.

[*They look at passageway leading down from panel.*]

ALCIE (*hysterically*). The miner lad spoke truly. The Princess is gone, and she could not have passed through the halls without our seeing.

THORWALD. Be still! Be still! (*To guards*) See, there's a passage hewn to this very chamber. Down, then, to the rescue! We will follow!

[*Gundred starts to descend.*]

SOLBERG. Gundred sticks fast! A curse on our broad shoulders! The passage is too narrow. We must blast it.

MABINA (*at left of stage, standing alone save for Alcie, to whom she speaks*). Run! Fetch the boy from the courtyard! Oh, if I had but listened! (*Exit Alcie hurriedly, left. Hubbub of voices as guards hurry to work: The cellar! Blasting powder! Rouse the miners!*)

MABINA (*tensely to herself, her hands clasped*). The Princess! The Princess!

THORWALD (*directing groups and individuals*). Strike the great gong in the courtyard! Quick, signal fires. Speed messengers!

[*General stir and preparation. Cubert enters, left, followed by Alcie.*]

MABINA (*running to him*). Oh, miner lad, forgive me, and think quickly! The passage is too narrow for the guardsmen!

CUBERT (*rustling to panel*). But not for me! I'm goblin-sized, Mabina.

SOLBERG. We are to blast it.

THORWALD (*to Gundred*). Then bid them stay the blasting till the lad has time to reach the Goblins.

[*Exit Gundred, left.*]

SOLBERG (*doubtfully*). What will a mere lad do against so many?

CUBERT (*standing at the panel, facing audience, his face upraised and shining, his voice a-thrill*). What will the Princess do amongst so many unless one voice shall tell her help is coming?

[*He goes down the passage.*]

ALCIE (*passionately; hands clasped*). Oh, speed that help! Comfort the little Princess!

[*Mabina has darted to window at left background, and stands there for an instant. Through the window are seen signal-lights darting into flame along the dark ridges of the hills. Sound of a gong struck in the courtyard below, swift and insistent. New lights continually spring into being on the dark hillsides. It is evident that the news is spreading.*]

MABINA (*her voice a clear cry*). The countryside is rousing! Look! Look! The signal-fires!

QUICK CURTAIN

ACT III

SCENE I

The Goblins' council hall, a short time past midnight. It is an underground chamber closely resembling the forge room in that it is all of jagged rock. Iron lamps are fitted into the wall. They give a dullish glow.

In the center background a rude throne of rock, and beyond it, in the background, right, a slab-like space in the otherwise rough wall, with a huddle of stones beneath it closely resembling steps.

At the right, towards the foreground, there is an indenture in the stone wall which forms a natural niche.

There is a passage at left (background) which leads to the castle cellars; and a passage at right (background) which leads to chambers still deeper underground.

At the rise of the curtain the stage is deserted, but after a moment the Goblins begin to enter, bearing the Princess, still asleep, on the slip mattress. This they place in the center of the stage, after which they crouch about in it a semicircle, watching her.

KOLL (as the Princess is carried in). Never a sound! Tread softly! She still sleeps!

MOTTLESNOUT (indicating the center of the stage, towards foreground, and pointing to slip mattress). Shall we place it here?

KING SHADOWCOB. Yes, here.

RATKIN. Hush! She is waking!

GWENDA (stirring, then sitting up and rubbing her eyes as she gazes about her, terrified, bewildered). Where am I? Where am I? Oh, I thought I was safe in my own little bed with Mabina beside me! Yet if this is a nightmare, why don't I awaken? (With poignant terror) The shadows that I feared — they've come alive! They're staring at me! Where am I? (Very piteously) Who are you?

KING SHADOWCOB. The Goblins, Princess, amongst whom you have come to live.

GWENDA. To live? Here? (Brokenly, yet trying to be brave) Why, you are jesting!

KING SHADOWCOB. A Goblin never jests, your Highness.

GWENDA. Oh, nothing but a jest could be so cruel. No, no, good Goblins, 'tis but half-earnest that you speak. If you will take me back, the King, my father, will reward you generously. Oh, take me home, good Goblin, take me home. Indeed, indeed, my father will reward you.

KING SHADOWCOB. Who comes with us, Princess, does not return again.

GWENDA (proudly). The guards will search for me.

KING SHADOWCOB. Small good will be their searching. If they should try to follow, we have means to stop them. There

are few who can probe the ways of goblin cunning. There are none who can trace our paths so far beneath the ground. *[He gives pantomimic directions for Koll and Troll to remove slip mattress, which they carry to the back of the stage.]*

GWENDA (*to herself*). Cubert, the miner boy — if he knew, he would aid me! I am the daughter of a King. A Princess should not falter.

[She tries to face them with courage, but, after an instant, hides her eyes with her hands.]

RATKIN (*with interest*). It is as Troll told us! Salt-water is beginning to trickle out of her eyes!

KING SHADOWCOB. That comes from being used to daylight. Soon, Princess, you will learn to love the dark. We will teach you the ways of those who live beneath the earth. Up, then, Goblins! We must prepare for ceremony. The throne-robe, Koll. The scepter, Ratkin.

[General stir, which takes the Goblins to the back of the stage.]

GWENDA (*to herself*). I must not anger them. I must do as they bid me until help arrives!

[At the back of the stage the throne has been covered with the dully sparkling throne-robe, so that it forms a royal seat.]

MOTTLESNOUT. Princess, your throne awaits you.

[He leads her to the background. The Goblins divide, standing in semicircle about the throne. The Princess shudders, shrinking from Mottlesnout's touch.]

KING SHADOWCOB (*as Gwenda is seated on throne*). You will not shrink when you have known us longer, Princess. When you are older you will marry Prince Slumpkin, and be our Queen. Now you shall meet the Goblins one by one, and learn to call them each by name.

[In pantomime the foremost Goblins are presented. The rest, standing in broken semicircle, fall on one knee. Grotesque imitation of court ceremony.]

KING SHADOWCOB (*leading Gwenda to center foreground*). Come, now, Princess, since we've pledged our fealty to you, you shall do us the same in turn. You shall drink to the Goblins. Ratkin, a cup of goblin wine!

[Ratkin brings the grotesque goblet filled with the wine which the Goblins made in the first act.

GWENDA (surrounded by Goblins, puts the cup to her lips, and then shudders). No! No! I cannot.

[Thrusts goblet blindly into Ratkin's hands.

KING SHADOWCOB (grimly). We are waiting, Princess.

RATKIN. A health, Princess. A health to the Goblins!

[Thrusts forward the cup.

GWENDA (shudderingly retreating a step or two, and speaking passionately). I cannot drink it!

RATKIN (as Goblins close menacingly about her, while Cubert swiftly enters from passage, left). Nay, but you shall!

CUBERT (crashing down cup from Ratkin's hand). Not while my ax can speak!

GWENDA (with a cry). Cubert! I hoped you'd come!

[Clings to him in passion of relief. Goblins wrench them apart. Babble of goblin voices. "It's the miner lad." "Seize him!" "Rend him." "Tear him limb from limb." Gwenda, unable to aid Cubert, is swept in niche of the wall, right, where she remains during what ensues. Cubert fights silently and stubbornly, at right, while Shadowcob, with a group of Goblins, at left, holds animated discussion. Cubert fights with his back to left group, and is too occupied with defending himself to observe what follows.

KING SHADOWCOB (watching the struggle). He is strong, for all that he is nearly the same size as ourselves! He must have chanced on our secret passage. (To Ratkin) Go search if there be others of his kind.

[Exit Ratkin, left.

MOTTLESNOUT. He would not have dared to face so many of us if he had not known that help was near. The castle guards must be rousing!

[He darts after Ratkin.

SLUMPKIN (excitedly). Rousing and following!

[Runs toward background: then pauses, tensely, waiting for news.

RATKIN (returning with Mottlesnout). The castle-folk are blasting at the cellar. I can hear the echo.

CLAWFOOT. The miner lad would never have faced so many of us if he had not known that help was near.

KING SHADOWCOB (*indicating passage at left*). Then, Troll, take picks, and unloose the river from its bed.

[*Group of Goblins, armed with picks, dart after Troll, up passageway, left.*]

CUBERT (*to himself, in a tense, clear whisper*). The river! (*Aloud, and valiantly, as he still fights*) Have courage, Princess! Good help is soon coming!

[*The struggle sways towards the left of the stage. Slumpkin darts towards the niche in the right wall.*]

SLUMPKIN (*with jeering laughter*). When good help comes it will not find her!

[*Cubert perceives that Slumpkin is approaching Gwenda. With a sudden, superhuman effort he wrenches himself free, seizes a goblin crowbar from the Goblin nearest him, and stands in front of Gwenda ere Slumpkin can reach her, the crowbar menacingly upheld in his hand.*]

CUBERT. Touch her not on your life! Which of you chooses a cleft skull? Come forward!

[*For a moment the Goblins fall back, leaving a clear space about Cubert. Then, gradually, they begin to close in again. Half the Goblins are taking directions from Shadowcob, left. The others surround Cubert, right. The fight goes against him. — While he is engaging the Goblins nearest him, a smaller Goblin, unnoticed by Cubert, slides snake-fashion along the ground, and catches Cubert by the feet. He is then tripped, caught, and wrenched into the center of the stage, while other Goblins seize and hold the Princess. Cubert, seeing that he is overmatched, stands quietly for an instant, as one who would hoard his strength against a final effort.*]

KING SHADOWCOB. So, miner's lad, does your tongue wag as bravely, and your heart beat as stoutly as it did a moment since?

CUBERT (*defiantly*). I fear neither you nor your Goblins!

[*At this, Mottlesnout and Koll fly at Cubert angrily, and it seems as if the struggle would begin again.*]

KING SHADOWCOB. Gently, gently, Mottlesnout! Remember he is of more use to us alive than dead. We will force him to work at our forge fire, and he will serve us well.

[*Ratkin, followed by other Goblins who have been assisting him up passageway, left, suddenly returns.*

RATKIN (*at top of his lungs*). Danger! Danger!

KING SHADOWCOB. What ails you, Ratkin?

RATKIN (*breathlessly*). Sire, the outward walls of our passage are worn so thin that at the first stroke of my pick the water came rushing through a thousand times faster than we planned. 'Tis a muddy torrent sweeping all before it.

KING SHADOWCOB (*in a frenzy of terror*). Down to your lower caverns, Goblins, if you'd save your lives! The river is breaking in upon us! Leave the lad! He cannot harm us. We have not time to deal with him.

A GOBLIN (*pausing by Gwenda*). And the little Princess?

CUBERT (*again rushing to the rescue, crowbar in hand*). You shall taste again what you felt before.

TROLL (*to Koll, who approaches the Princess*). Leave her, Koll. It is not worth the struggle! (*Goblins swarm out, right*) Hark to the river! We have no time to lose!

KOLL (*with savage menace at Cubert*). But I would make an end!

TROLL. The river will do that! Harken!

[*They scamper out, the last of the Goblins to go.*

CUBERT. The river! . . . Wait, Princess!

[*He runs up the passageway at left, from whence comes a sound as of a torrent of water rushing at a great distance away, yet coming gradually nearer and nearer. It is a faint sound at first, yet it increases slowly and steadily during the ensuing moments. It is never loud, but it is more and more ominous. Cubert comes back after an instant, feeling his ankles. The iron lamps in the wall begin to flicker and give a fainter and fainter light.*

GWENDA (*peering at Cubert through the growing darkness, perceives that he touches his ankles, and also that they are water-drenched*). Why, they are wet! The mine will soon be

flooded! The water will pour down the passageway ere the castle-folk can reach us!

CUBERT. No! No! Princess! There's some way out. I'll find it. Courage! 'Tis but some trick! Some goblin evil! (*He runs to passage, right*) There's nothing but a long dark passage leading deeper into the earth!

GWENDA. Can we not follow?

CUBERT. We cannot breathe the air that Goblins breathe. So far underground we should smother and die.

[*Looks about for another means of escape.*]

GWENDA (*standing near Cubert as he pauses by rocky wall at left foreground*). It is true, then, what the Goblins said? We are to die?

CUBERT. Courage, Princess! Oh, if the castle-folk would only hasten! Oh, if they could but reach this council hall!

GWENDA. It's growing darker and darker!

CUBERT. Courage, sweet Princess, courage! (*To himself, with face uplifted*) And yet . . . how can — I — speak of courage. . . . I, who am beginning to be afraid! (*His words end in a tense whisper. Then, with a visible effort, he pulls himself together*) Well, what of it? I'll face my fear! I'll meet the dark as a miner's son should! If I had but a flint with which to strike a light. (*Gropes in his pockets*) They're empty! Empty? Why, there's the ring! (*Draws it forth*) My ring! She said that it would guide me! (*Puts it on. Faint music as in Act I. By this time the stage has grown absolutely dark*) Isn't that her music? There's something stretching out beneath the ring like a spider's web! (*At this a Silver Thread with a curious light about it is seen through the dark. It leads from where Cubert stands, left, to the irregular stone steps, right background. At sight of it Cubert's voice rings out, electrified*) It's shining through the dark before us! (*Follows it slowly, leading the Princess*) It's a silver thread — a silver thread of safety! I'll follow it and trust The Woman from Beyond the Hills! 'Tis her White Magic! . . . I'll follow. The flood cannot hurt us. . . . It cannot dim its light. . . . We'll follow. . . .

[*The music, which has been growing gradually louder, now swells into a splendid harmony. A door of stone swings open at the top of the irregular stone steps in background, and beyond it is seen a vista of hills bathed in pale moonlight.*]

CUBERT (*in a thrilled voice*). Princess! We're free! We're done with fearing! 'Tis the wane o' the moon. The dawn wind is astir!

GWENDA. How soft it blows against my face! O wind, teach us, teach us where lies safety!

CUBERT (*joyfully expectant*). O Silver Thread, guide us — guide us now to safety!

[*He moves, with uplifted face, his finger following the Silver Thread, his arm protectingly about the little Princess. The light moves with him, following him as he exits. The door closes behind him. The stage instantly grows black. There is a wild sound like the thunder of waters tearing through the passage, as the curtain falls.*]

SCENE II

Cubert's home, the same as in Act I. Faint moonlight, giving way to the blackness that comes before the dawn. Against the horizon, signal fires a-light. Dame Morna enters from without, pauses in doorway, and speaks as one to whom the silence is intolerable, and the sound of any human voice — even her own — a comfort.

DAME MORNA. Still fires a-blaze, and men at work! More men. And yet no sign of Cubert and the Princess. Oh, I would work with the men myself, but there is nought that I can do to aid them. They have no need for women folk at such an hour. The dark before the dawn, and yet no sign! Only blackness. Oh, if the castle guards had reached the passage in time, but now the mine is flooded with water — the river is rushing in. (*With flicker of hope*) And yet — there may be other passages — goblin passages that folk do not know. Cubert is quick and brave! I know he'll find them! But oh — the waiting! (*Sound of faint music*) What's that? What's that? 'Tis like an echo! Now I remember — 'twas

The Woman from Beyond the Hills — an echo of *her* music. What was it that she said? That folk must face their fearing. So if my lad must die, is it not well that he should die defending? (*With face upraised*) Fight bravely in the Dark, my little Cubert! And yet — he may not die. I have no beacon-light, and yet — oh, here within me — the fire of Hope — I'll keep it burning strongly. Oh, if that hope could reach him through the darkness! There are things beyond my knowing. Perhaps it may. Perhaps it may. I'll set out milk, and keep the hearthstone warm. (*Bends at hearth*) Was that a step? (*Turns*) A voice in the darkness?

CUBERT (*entering with the Princess*). A step? There spoke my mother!

DAME MORNA. Cubert! 'Tis you! (*Clasps him to her*) Your very self! (*Holds out welcoming hands*) And the little Princess — !

CUBERT. All safe, all safe, my mother. I brought her first to your warm arms and tender care.

DAME MORNA (*as she leads the Princess to the hearth*). You are not going, Cubert?

CUBERT (*pausing*). To tell the news, my mother. Why, you would scarce believe it; but of all the folk who are stirring we met not a single one!

[*Exit Cubert.*]

GWENDA (*seated at hearth*). No, all was dark around us save for the Silver Thread that ran beneath Cubert's fingers — the Silver Thread that came from the ring and guided us to safety.

DAME MORNA (*to herself*). The ring — the ring that would save him if he did not fear. Oh, that was Wisdom's wisdom!

GWENDA. What say you, Dame Morna?

DAME MORNA. Drink this milk, my Princess. So cold you are, and wet with dew. Stand closer to the fire.

GWENDA. I am not cold, Dame Morna. Listen! They're cheering! (*Runs to window*) Why, 'tis my father on the highroad to the castle! 'Tis the King, my father! He has

come back, and I must run to meet him. Give me the cloak, Dame Morna. I must tell him all.

[*Exit Gwenda.*]

DAME MORNA (*watching at window*). He has lifted her up to his saddle, and my son stands there beside him. They are coming here.

KING RADNOR (*entering, followed by Gwenda and Cubert*). I seek the happy mother of a brave son. I can offer Dame Morna nothing; for in Cubert she possesses more than the gold of kings. But to Dame Morna's son, for all that he has done this night, I will give that which he asks, and I will not stint the giving.

CUBERT. I humbly thank your Majesty; but there is little that I wish save a velvet gown for my mother, and a new pickax for myself.

KING RADNOR. I would have given you the half of my kingdom, boy!

CUBERT (*confused*). Indeed, sire, I would not know what to do with half a kingdom!

KING RADNOR. Yet it is wise heads and brave hearts such as yours that should help kings to rule.

GWENDA (*smiling at Cubert*). That means you'll come to the castle every day.

[*Solberg enters, breathlessly, and falls on one knee before the King.*]

KING RADNOR. Why, how now, Solberg?

SOLBERG. I bring you great news, Sire. The schemes of the Goblins have fallen on their own wicked heads. The river that they turned from its course has become a raging torrent. It has broken in the walls of their very deepest passages, penetrating far beneath their council hall. The hideous bodies of dead Goblins fill the mines. There's not one left to tell the tale.

[*King makes gesture of dismissal; Solberg rises, bows, and exits.*]

GWENDA (*quickly*). So you see, father, if it hadn't been for Cubert, I wouldn't be here now. I need no longer fear the shadows!

[*King and Princess exeunt.*]

CUBERT (*joyfully*). You'll be going to Court, my mother, and wear a velvet gown!

DAME MORNA. What do I care for velvets, now that I have you safe?

CUBERT (*at door: the sky is flushed with dawn; the signal fires are quenched*). See, mother, see!

DAME MORNA. See what, dear lad o' mine?

CUBERT (*in a wonder-thrilled voice*). Look! There where the sun is rising the strange old woman of yesterday stood for a moment on that hilltop, and the light was on her face, and as I looked at her she smiled. (*Turning back into room*) What think you that it means — the visit she paid us, the ring she gave me, the Silver Thread that guided me to safety? Does it mean that if we are brave and steadfast the dark will always clear? Does it mean that faith and courage help to lead us upward?

DAME MORNA (*her arm about him*). Aye, son, until we come unto the light at last!

CURTAIN

ABOUT THE TESTING OF SIR GAWAYNE

If you read Malory's "Morte d'Arthur" or Tennyson's "Idylls of the King"; if you lose yourself in the fascinating pages of Sidney Lanier's "The Boy's King Arthur" or Howard Pyle's King Arthur stories, you will come to understand what is meant by tales of chivalry. For the Knights of the Round Table, like the Chevalier Bayard of later day, — "the good knight without fear and without reproach" — were defenders of the weak and upholders, for the most part, of righteousness.

There are different opinions regarding the character of Sir Gawayne, but the weight of belief is that his worth was greater than he took credit for. Miss Merington turned to the Arthurian legends in her effort to "place the best of whatever its kind within the reach of my friends The Children, in the form of innocent merriment." She has not only caught the beauty of manner in her little play, but as well the beauty of expression with which the Knight used to reflect the goodness welling in his heart. There are many dramas of Greek heroes and of Robin Hood's merry men, but none written with that distinction of style which marks "The Testing of Sir Gawayne."

Miss Merington, writer of many plays, the most successful of which was "Captain Letterblair", in which the actor, E. H. Sothern, met his first success, was a chivalric friend of the dramatist, Clyde Fitch, who, though he never wrote a play for children (young folks would, nevertheless, enjoy his "Nathan Hale" and "Barbara Frietchie"), caught the spirit of childhood in a refreshing volume of short stories, "The Knighting of the Twins." Miss Merington's "Festival Plays" and "Picture Plays" and "Holiday Plays" represent, in part, her efforts

to write actable pieces for all occasions. Read her "Father Time and His Children," in "Festival Plays", and contrast it with Christina Rossetti's "The Months." The one is written for practical purposes of production; the other is a poet's conception worked out in a poet's way.

THE TESTING OF SIR GAWAYNE

All Hallowe'en

BY MARGUERITE MERINGTON

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From "Festival Plays."

For Dramatic use of this play application must be made to the publishers, Duffield & Company, New York.

THE TESTING OF SIR GAWAYNE

What follows takes place at King Arthur's Court in merry Carlisle, on the Eve of All-Hallowmass when strange things happen . . . when the wicked crafts of sorcery work havoc with knightly adventure, and when enchantments bring about marvelous endings in affairs of love. We find ourselves looking backward through the years upon a scene that renews itself before our eyes in the castle hall. On one side is the banqueting-hall, and this way the servants pass to the kitchen [kitching we shall hear it called by Sir Kay, the steward or Seneschal]. On the other side the members of the Court pass to their sleeping-chambers or to the massive door that opens to the outer world. A window gives, first, the light of late afternoon in autumn, then moonlight, and finally a bright dawn. A fire on the great hearth affords a cheerful glow. When it is necessary to light the hall servants will set torches in their sockets against the wall. The walls are adorned with trophies of the chase, and with the arms of knight-errantry. A table, settees, a few plain chairs, and throne-chairs for the King and Queen suffice for furnishing. We shall now and then be taxed in our memory of French and Latin to understand some of the expressions we shall hear . . . as, for instance, when someone bidding others leave the room cries, "Avoid! Avoid!" or when the word "quest" is used at one time as we should say "question," and at another for "adventure." We shall observe, too, that forms we have been taught to consider common or ungrammatical, obtained then in polite language, such as "afore" where we now say "before," or the double negative, "not never." This is something that should make us hesitate before we criticise the speech of simple people, country-folk, and ask ourselves if their homely phrase is not after all but a survival of the elegance of days gone by. It will interest us furthermore to note, in these

days of chivalry, when religion, love, and deeds of arms are the topics of the chronicler, how freely, though not lightly, the names of Ho'y Persons are invoked in conversation. The Characters whom we shall see enact the little drama are King Arthur and his lovely Queen Guinevere, several Knights of the Round Table, including Sir Kay, the gruff steward or Seneschal, Sir Bors, Sir Bleoberis, Sir Meliogrance, and Sir Gawayne, about whom the story concerns itself. Then there is the Knight, the rescue of whom nearly cost Arthur his realm, his life, and his queen. Also there is the Little Page who for his precocious valour was dubbed knight and thereafter known as Sir Griflet, and there is the Outrageous Giant who was but the gallant Knight Déliveré under a spell of enchantment. Among the ladies we find Dame Laurel, and the Damosel who rode in such breathless haste to Arthur's Court, seeking aid for her captive Knight. And, most important is the Déliverance La Belle Pilgrim who was mocked at for being "a loathly lady." And of course there are Pages and Servants and Gentlemen and Women in waiting and Squires and all the royal rest.

The Queen is seated at her embroidery-frame, some of her Ladies similarly occupied about her. The Damosel sits near, trying to fix her thoughts upon a scroll that she, however, does not read. Some of the Knights are occupying themselves peacefully in divers ways, two playing a game of chess. Someone sings to the harp. Meanwhile the Little Page keeps watch at the window.

GUINEVERE. Are there no signs yet of my lord that he doth return?

THE PAGE. Not yet, madam!

GUINEVERE. Alas! Evensong time is overpassed, and my lord comes not!

THE DAMOSEL. Now is my heart more heavier than ever it was before for the sorrow I have brought upon the gentlest and fairest lady of the world!

GUINEVERE. Ah, you do well to let fall down your head for shame, for we had never been in this sorry pass if you had

never come hitherward, praying King Arthur for succour for your knight!

THE DAMOSEL. Ah, madam, I pray you of mercy to mis-say me no more, for my heart is like to brast with its own woe!

SIR KAY. Madam, you are greatly to blame so to rebuke the damosel, for, wit ye well, of his own will my lord King Arthur did seek and take him upon that hard adventure he is gone upon!

GUINEVERE. So God me help, it is all the greater shame to all you noble knights that your fellowship should suffer your King to take such an adventure upon him to his destruction! (*The Knights exclaim, crying, "Gramercy, madam! Now by my head, etc."* But much wrought up, the Queen continues) Ah, now, I see well that all coward knights be not dead, sith you, Sir Bors, and you, Sir Bleoberis, sit playing at the chess, the while my dear lord, your King, may be mishandled and smitten down, horse and man, or villainously wounded, or, peradventure, slain!

[*The two Knights thus addressed start up, angrily.*]

SIR BLEOBERIS. Gramercy, madam! It passeth bounds that you should put the suspicion of cowardice on me, and there is no knight under heaven that dare make it good on me!

SIR BORS. Madam, you are a woman, and may not fight, but let now some worshipful knight of our fellowship take on himself your quarrel, and call me coward, and here is my glove to prove the contrary with my hands upon his body! [*Throws down his glove.*]

SIR MELIOGRANCE. Then here am I known to all men as Sir Meliogrance, and I will take on me my lady the Queen's quarrel, and I will joust with you, Sir Bleoberis, and you, Sir Bors, proving you recreant knights with my hands upon your bodies!

[*He throws down his glove.*]

THE DAMOSEL (*moans*). Now am I right heavy for the sorrow I have brought upon King Arthur's Court!

A LITTLE PAGE (*runs forward, challengingly*). Now though hardly of years to bear a shield, yet if some worshipful knight

of this fellowship will dub me his knight, then will I too take on me the Queen's quarrel, jousting with the knights of these worshipful knights' following, for leaver would I be cut into an hundred pieces than that my dear lady should be gainsayed!

[The closing words, spoken almost with sobs.]

SOME OF THE LADIES. Oh, spoken like a sweet and noble child!

[Many of the Knights laugh.]

SIR BORS (*affecting to shudder*). Boo-oo! My gentlemen had best look well to their arms, now that a raging lion is come among us!

[A fellow-Page giggles tauntingly at our hero who turns on him.]

THE LITTLE PAGE. I am of gentle blood, and but for lack of beard, as well entitled to bear arms as any of this worshipful fellowship, and if anyone is so venturesome that he would say the contrary I will make it good with my body upon his body, with these two hands tearing him limb from limb!

[The giggling Page retreats, affrighted.]

SIR BLEOBERIS (*with impatience*). Is this a pages' affair or a quarrel among knights of worship and renown?

GUINEVERE (*with emotion*). Peace, my good Griflet! And you, gentlemen, forbear! I spake over hastily!

SIR KAY. Peace, daffish knights! Pick up your gloves! See ye not that the Queen is distraught and clean out of her wits with anxiousness for the safety of the King? . . . Madam, you do ill to begrudge King Arthur his lone questings, sith all men of high courage find it merry to serve under a chieftain that will put his person in adventure as other poor knights do! (*To this there is a general murmur of assent*) And now, as the tables have been spread this long while, for the third time of asking, will it pleasure you to sit down to supper?

[Another general murmur shows that this suggestion meets with favour.]

GUINEVERE. Let those eat and drink who can! My heart is too heavy, but go you all, my lords and ladies, gentlemen, and gentlewomen! Sit you down to meat and enjoy the

feast! Later will I sup privily with my lord on his return!
 . . . As for you, worshipful knights, let me who provoked
 the quarrel between you heal it without the letting of good
 blood!

[Before the would-be combatants can prevent her she herself picks up and restores their thrown-down gloves. All do her fitting obeisance, and pass into the banqueting-hall with the exception of the Damosel and the Little Page.]

SIR BLEOBERIS (*as they go out, to Sir Bors*). Gramercy, but a good game was spoiled! I had you mated in three moves!

SIR BORS. Not so! I had your queen in forfeit!

SIR BLEOBERIS. Ah, the Queen, the Queen! 'Tis ever the Queen that will make or mar the fortunes of the King!

[From the banqueting-hall one hears the sounds of merry-making subdued, and the strains of minstrelsy, as an heroic lay is sung to the accompaniment of the harp.]

GUINEVERE. Now let saddle horses, and guided by you, good damosel, I will follow after my lord . . . Hark! I hear an horn . . . Arthur!

[The winding notes of the horn are heard.]

THE LITTLE PAGE (*at the window*). Nay, madam! It is but Sir Gawayne who returns from hunting!

GUINEVERE. Sir Gawayne! Let send for him! (*The Page hastens out*) It may be he brings tidings of my lord!

[The Page returns, attending on Sir Gawayne.]

SIR GAWAYNE (*kneeling to kiss the hand of the Queen*). Fair Queen and dear Aunt Guinevere! But wherefore do I find you in such heavy cheer with the tears upon your cheeks?

GUINEVERE. Ah, Gawayne! Your dear uncle, my good lord, the King. . . . But sit we down and ye shall hear! (*They sit*) It was yestreen at the undern hour that we sat here, listening to minstrelsy! All of a sudden the King cried out, "Now, by the Holy Rood the third day hence will be All-Hallowmass! Now, by the faith of my body and on my head as anointed king, will I not set me down to meat on All-Hallowmass until I shall have taken on me and brought to a good end some high quest that shall bring to me and

my goodly fellowship great worship and renown!" Hardly had he so spoken when, riding into the hall, came this damosel who thereon alighted from her palfrey and threw herself flatling at my good lord's feet and lay there grovelling and praying him for succour for her knight!

THE DAMOSEL (*weeping*). Alas that ever I came!

GUINEVERE. Fie upon you for weeping when tears are all no boot! Relate your errand to Sir Gawayne!

THE DAMOSEL. It fortun'd in this wise: my troth was plighted that I should be wedded to a passing fair gentleman and knight of haut renown, a true lover, and deserving of a good end! As together we rode forth, planning for our marriage, we passed through a dark forest till we happed upon a grimly castle! As we gazed upon its towers, wondering who might dwell therein, out rushed a churlish knight, oh, a mighty giant, one of the world's perilous fighters, seven times the height of mortal man, and with the strength of seven men! (*In spite of his bravado the Little Page shivers audibly*) Nathless all undaunted my knight dressed his shield and set his spear, crying, "How now, rude Saracen! An ye be a true fighter come and prove it, spear to spear, and sword to sword, and body to body!" But the miscreant laughed in mockage, and set on my poor love, belabouring him with a huge club, and dragged him down from his saddle, shivering his spear, and shattering his sword, and splitting his helm clear through to the brain-pan! (*At this the Little Page shudders in delighted horror*) Ah, Little Page, I see well now that ye like this tale, but I do assure you it is no matter for enjoyment! . . . And all this while I shrieked shrilly and kneeled in the mire before the churlish wight, with my two hands lifted, praying him for the love of Heaven to have mercy on my knight! But the murtherous monster only laughed the louder, with a great noise like thunder, spitting flames from his enormous mouth, and bound my knight hand and feet and threw him into the dungeon keep, the while I, leaping on my palfrey, made my escape, riding hither, like the wind, to merry Carlisle, to King Arthur's Court, clear into

this very hall, and threw myself at the King's feet, praying succour for my love!

Weeps.

GUINEVERE. And did my lord stay his hand? "Gramercy," cried he, "but this is the quest that even now I prayed for! Nor by the faith of my body as anointed king will I set me down to meat on All-Hallowmass or ever I shall have brought it to a good end!" And then he made no more words, but took his shield and buckled it about his neck, and girt on his good sword Excalibur, and lightly he took his horse and leaped upon him, and departed on his way! And, though it is but a little faring hence, last night went by, and to-day the hour of evensong is overpassed, and he comes not back! *[Weeps.]*

SIR GAWAYNE (*walks, perturbed*). Now meseemeth for to tempt God it is no wisdom, and the King hath put this realm into the greatest damage that ever realm was in by jeopardizing his life in hazard with a giant!

GUINEVERE. Ye say truth! — Gawayne — (*She advances toward the Knight, and speaks impressively*) All other knights of the good fellowship say that it would put rebukes on Arthur, shaming him through England, Ireland, Wales, and Scotland, for to seek to rescue him in an adventure he has made oath to enterprise alone! But I say, not so, sithen it is no mortal man he has to do with, but a churlish wight, an outrageous giant, armed with the craft of sorcery!

SIR GAWAYNE (*struck by this argument*). By my head, that sounds like a good counsel!

GUINEVERE (*following up her advantage*). Then by your knight-hood and fealty do I charge ye, take upon yourself this matter!

SIR GAWAYNE (*with due solemnity*). That will I do, and that will I swear to do, by my blood: as a Knight of the Round Table, and on the Four Evangelists!

[He kisses the hand of the Queen and is about to go, but pauses, as the winding notes of a horn are heard. All exclaim.]

ALL (*excited*). Hark! An horn!

THE LITTLE PAGE (*excited, at the window*). Madam, it is the King who rides hither attended by a knight, their horses all-to-beswet!

GUINEVERE. Arthur . . . God be praised!

SIR GAWAYNE (*at the same time*). Thanks be to Heaven, the King!

THE DAMOSEL. My knight, thank Heaven!

[All hasten to meet the arrivals; meanwhile the harping in the banquet-hall is stilled, and the banqueters crowd in, exclaiming joyfully for the King's safe return.]

SIR KAY (*announcing it to the others*). It is Arthur who comes back from his quest . . . and the knight to his damo-sel! Ah, now there will be clippings and kissings and calling of sweet names, I warrant!

[Arthur and Guinevere enter, attended by Sir Gawayne and the Little Page, and followed by the Damosel and her Knight. Now ensues a moment of excited welcome, and general greeting. Attendants bring torches.]

ARTHUR (*to Guinevere, as they enter*). Ah, my dear love, it was indeed an adventure of great marvel . . . greater hath no knight never happed upon, I dare be sworn!

GUINEVERE. And, thanks be to God, you came through it unscathed! (*She places him tenderly in his chair of state, and looks at him with scrutiny*) Not so! For here is blood upon your hand! . . . Haste, now! Let bring water and a healing salve! *[Giving orders.]*

ARTHUR. It is not needed! It is but a little scratch of which I shall be hastily whole, by the will of God!

GUINEVERE. Come, then, relate your adventure! But you must be a-hungered and athirst! . . . Let make a banquet of royalness as great as may be, in honour of my lord's return! *[Going toward the banquet-hall.]*

ARTHUR (*detaining her*). Stay! This is no time for feastings! (*This announcement causes a sensation*) Bring me a little deal of water, for my tongue is parched!

[He drains the cup which is brought to him, while all look on, struck by his far from joyous tone.]



THE TESTING OF SIR GAWAYNE

Arthur. — "Whereon rushed forth the most outrageous churl and greatest murtherer was ever seen. with a huge laughter like thunder, and spitting flames of fire from his monstrous mouth!"

SIR BLEOBERIS (*to Sir Bors*). What ails the King? Think you he has been mischieved in some sort?

SIR BORS. Truly his countenance is heavy as did he see himself like to be soonly in checkmate!

ARTHUR (*refreshed by the draught*). Ah! Later will I have meat and wine. But first must I lay bare my breast, making clean avowals! My lords and ladies, gentlemen and gentlewomen, you see here before you Arthur, King of Britain, having under my obeisance Wales, Ireland and Scotland, by the grace of God, and many other realms, also head of the worshipful fellowship of the Knights of the Round Table. And . . . (*he pauses, impressively*) by the sinful crafts of the devil, a prisoner on parole; under pain of forfeiture of my lands, my life, my Queen!

[*This, as well may be imagined, causes a profound sensation.*]

SEVERAL KNIGHTS AND LADIES. My lord, what say you!

OTHER KNIGHTS AND LADIES. Sir! What words be these!

GUINEVERE. My lord . . . Arthur!

SEVERAL VOICES. The Queen! Look to the Queen! . . . Oh, almost she fell down in a swoond!

GUINEVERE (*recovering herself*). It is naught. . . . My lord, I pray you that you will expound your fearsome rede!

ARTHUR. That will I do! . . . Let all be seated. (*All obey the King, whereupon Arthur explains*) How I took oath on my head as anointed king not to set me down to meat on All-Hallowmass or I had undertaken some haut quest already do ye know. (*All assent*) Also know ye how this damosel came riding hither into this hall, seeking succour for her knight! (*Again all assent*) And none is there that knows not how forthwith I enterprised the matter! (*Again all assent*) Now hear ye how I fared with it! (*All settle themselves like children to whom a thrilling tale is to be told*) Arrived afore the grimly tower I blew my horn and cried, "How now, Sir Knight, an ye be a fair fighter, come, prove it, spear to spear, and sword to sword, and body to body!" Whereon rushed forth the most outrageous churl and greatest murtherer was ever seen, with a huge laughter like

thunder, and spitting flames of fire from his monstrous mouth! And by sorcery he cast an evil spell on me, so that its scabbard would not loose my sword Excalibur, and my arm fell helpless to my side like as it had been the arm of a dead corp! (*The Ladies and the younger Pages shudder audibly*) "How, now, King Arthur," cried the rude churl, "I have you at a vantage, so best yield yourself without ado!" "Now not ever, nor never on my head," I answered him, "for I had leaver to be hacked to bits than cry mercy of such a fiendly knight that it is no true knight at all!" (*General exclamations of approval greet this, many crying, "Oh, well said!" . . . "Spoken in kinglywise!" etc.*) "Then," said he, "you leese, not alone your life the which you seem to hold so light, but also your realms, and your Queen!" (*Again there is a shuddering sensation*) Well, for to curtail a long tale short, "Come," said he, "I will release the knight the which to deliver you came, and suffer you to depart as you came upon certain conditions!" "Name them," said I. "That you shall promise by the Holy Rood that you will not set you down to meat on All-Hallowmass until you shall have brought me the answer to a rede that I shall now propound to you!" "I assent to these," I said! [*All breathe a long sigh of relief, with exclamations of thankfulness that all has turned out so well.*]

GUINEVERE. Now, scarce can I wait to go to the Minster to do my thankings to God for such deliverance! . . . But the rede, my lord! The rede!

ALL. Aye, sir, the rede!

ARTHUR. Well may you ask! "What is it that all women most desire?"

ALL (*repeat, as it were a lesson*). "What is it that all women most desire?"

GUINEVERE. "What is it that all women most desire?" Oh, my dear love, as if there could be but one answer to that! All women most desire what I, most fortunate of women, have: A loving husband which is also a true and faithful knight of worship and renown! (*Many of those present con-*

cur in this, saying, "In sooth the Queen speaks for all!" and, "Now, could there be two minds about that!" and, "Gramercy, so also say I!" Others, however, differ, murmuring, "I doubt that is right!" and, "What is truth for one may not be truth for other!" and the like. Guinevere notices this and exclaims, saying) How now! It seems we are not all of one opinion!

DAME LAUREL. Madam, is it permitted that we may speak freely, each the thought in mind?

GUINEVERE. In sooth, Dame Laurel, I ordain and command that ye do so, for so only shall we arrive at true conclusions!

DAME LAUREL. Then, above the desire of a woman for a loving husband and worshipful knight do I set the desire of all women to be beautiful! (*There is a murmur of assent from many. The Dame continues*) For in the end beauty wins the husband, and so, possessing one, shall the woman be ensured of both!

[*This provokes a general laugh.*]

GUINEVERE. Many minds, many counsels, it would seem! Let now a clerkly scribe set down in writing these divers answers to our quest, to the end that my lord may take his choice of them! (*A Scribe prepares to write. Meanwhile, at a sign from Sir Kay, a Servant brings food and wine to the King who sits and partakes of this. Guinevere continues her quest*) Our knights have not spoken! Sir Bors, what, say you, do all women most desire?

SIR BORS. Madam, I know not what all women do most desire, but I do know what all women should most desire! (*There is an expectant hush, as he pauses impressively*) To be pleasing in the eyes of their lords!

[*This provokes laughter, though some gentlemen seem to agree with the speaker.*]

DAME LAUREL. Our thanks to you, Sir Bors!

GUINEVERE. And what says Sir Bleoberis?

SIR BLEOBERIS. To be richly beseen, madam; to be arrayed with the goodliest guise, in silk attire, with precious stones,

perfumes of sweet savour, and gold and silver, great plenty, for to spend!

[*This is received with amusement and protest from the Ladies.*

SIR KAY (*nods assent*). Ye say well! (*To Sir Bleoberis*) And add to these things, good cheer; meat, and spiced drinkings, and sweet eatings out of measure!

[*More mirth, and renewed protests. Cries of "Fie on you, Sir Kay! For shame for an ungentle knight, Sir Kay! Oh, knight of the discourteous tongue, Sir Kay!" etc.*

GUINEVERE. Meseemeth our faithful Seneschal hath a grutch against all ladies! . . . How sayeth Sir Meliogrance?

SIR MELIOGRANCE. Madam, I hold that all women in their hearts crave flattery, fair words and sooth, on the tongue of men! (*This also provokes mirth, and some protest, whereupon the Knight turns on the Ladies*) Aye, and is there one among you will dare gainsay me?

GUINEVERE. Now we know wherefore the shield of Sir Meliogrance is always kept so bright, sithence he pays for gentle service with fair words and sooth! Has any one withheld counsel?

[*Looks about the group.*

SEVERAL LADIES. Sir Gawayne! Sir Gawayne has not spoken!

SIR GAWAYNE. Now by the faith of my body should I be acquitted of answer! (*This is greeted with cries of, "And wherefore, Sir Knight?" on which Sir Gawayne explains, addressing himself to the Queen*) Madam, by your own ordinance was not a quest of these ladies set upon me, for my dolourous mishap whereby I slew a lady, smiting off her head? . . . And by their judgment am not I upon covenant to be courteous to all ladies and to fight for their quarrels while ever I shall live?

[*This is received with some amusement and with general assent to the justice of the plea.*

GUINEVERE. So then, my good lord! (*She takes the parchment from the Scribe and hands this to the King*) Seal with your signet and let send to the churlish knight these true answers to his quest!

ARTHUR. Alas, good dame! All these answers and more did I make incontinent, out of my own wit and with such simple cunning as it hath pleased Heaven to grant me. But . . .
[*He sighs.*]

GUINEVERE (*with anxiety*). But! Aye, my good lord; but?

ARTHUR. Labour lost and in vain! (*All exclaim, amazed*)
For all my pains, the outrageous wight put great rebukes and mockage on me, and made sport at me, and miscalled me fool! (*This produces a profound sensation*) And, an I bring him the true rede or ever I set me down to meat upon All-Hallowmass, my life is forfeit to him, and my lands, and fairest flower of my garland, my Queen!
[*Sighs, and exclamations of sorrow are heard on all sides.*]

THE DAMOSEL'S KNIGHT (*weeping*). Alas, alas, that ever such a captive knight as I should have power by misadventure to bring sorrow upon the greatest king and most champion of all the world!

SIR BLEOBERIS (*starting up*). Shall our worshipful fellowship be shamed to the world's end by a churlish Saracen that is an outrageous giant and no true knight? Let us gather a great host, well furnished and garnished of all manner of things that belong to the war, and let us do battle against him!
[*This suggestion is greeted with general acclaim.*]

SIR BORS. Oh, well said! And as Sir Bleoberis has devised so let it be done!

SIR MELIOGRANCE. Aye, sir! (*To Arthur*) In the name of our goodly fellowship let dress forthwith to the adventure!

THE LITTLE PAGE (*casting himself at Arthur's feet*). Oh, sir, for the love of Heaven I pray you give me the order of knight-hood that I too may joust upon this quest!

ARTHUR. A beardless boy, thou art full young and tender of age, methinketh, for to take so high an order upon thee!

THE LITTLE PAGE. Sir, I beseech you! For leaver would I be cut into an hundred pieces than that my Queen should be devoured by an horrible giant!

ARTHUR. Gramercy, it were pity to deny thee, for thou wilt

be a passing good man and fearless knight when thou comest to age! (*He draws his sword, and touches the lad's shoulders with the flat of it, saying*) In the name of high errantry, receive now the knighthood accolade! (*Then he raises the new Knight to his feet, and kisses him on both cheeks, saying*) Rise up, Sir Griflet! See to it that ye wear your new honours ever as beseems a chivalrous knight and honest gentleman! And God's blessing be on ye! (*Sir Griflet bows low, and returns to his place with becoming dignity, drawing himself up with great hauteur as he passes his fellow-Page who before had mocked at him. Arthur now looks about the group*) Gramercy, there never was no king that had so noble knights and valiant as have I! But this is no matter for deeds of arms! For did I not carry my sword Excalibur, the which is the sharpest and marvelest that was ever in any knight's hand! It is only by miracle that we can be delivered from the subtle crafts of enchantment, and discover the true rede to the outrageous monster's quest: What is it that all women most desire?

[*A great sigh goes up as all realise the truth of this.*

GUINEVERE (*takes a decision*). Now for the night let this quest overpass! Aye, my lords . . . (*Addressing the Knights who seem to demur*) For this night let us leave of this dolourous matter! This night we will take our rest, and to-morrow betimes we will send messengers north and south and east and west, seeking good counsel! Come, avoid! Avoid! To your chambers, all! And who knows but in a marvelous dream shall be expounded to us, What is it that all women most desire?

[*Taking Arthur by the hand she leads him out. All follow, repeating in some sort the question, "What is it . . . Gramercy, now what is it that all women do most desire?" Sir Kay and the Servants remain, the former giving directions for barring doors, extinguishing torches, and the like.*

SIR KAY. Bar well the door! (*To one Servant*) For, sooth, this is the eve of All-Hallowmass, when all manner of strange visitants may be abroad! . . . How now, ye lazy lusks!

(To other Servants who are stealthily gobbling up the leavings of the King's repast) Back to your kitching, ye turners of broaches and washers of dishes! In the devil's name shall ye wax fat as a porke hog on good browesse, purveyance for a king! Back to your kitching, knaves! (In consternation the Servants make their escape, by way of the banqueting-hall. Alone, Sir Kay looks about to see that all is in order, kicks a forward log into place upon the hearth, then stands beside the chimney, lost in thought. Speaks as if thinking aloud) What is it that all women do most desire? By my head I know not, and so to bed. (He is about to go, when there is a knock at the door, at first timid and hesitating, then gaining strength. The Knight starts) Now who may that be?

[A Shadow now crosses the moonlight that streams in through the window, and a voice is heard.

THE VOICE. Unshut the door! For the love of Heaven, good Seneschal, unshut the door!

SIR KAY. By the faith of my body, 'tis a woman!

THE VOICE. Gentle Knight Seneschal, of your charity, unshut the door!

SIR KAY. Not I! For it was a gentlewoman and no knight that led Adam into deadly sin, and well I wot it is the foul fiend himself hath sent ye hither for to shame me in my stewardship! Aroint thee! Aroint thee!

[He makes the sign of a cross in the air.

THE VOICE. Alas!

[The Shadow disappears.

SIR KAY. Ha! No fiend in the guise of a gentlewoman shall so mischief me!

[He lays himself down on a bench and sleeps. Enter Sir Gawayne, musing, shield in one hand, in the other a cloth.

SIR GAWAYNE. What is it that all women do most desire? Now by my knighthood it would seem a simple quest, yet it hath set the whole Court by the ears, and put the kingdom in jeopardy . . . and the Queen!

[He sits near the window and polishes his shield. Guinevere enters in sad meditation.

GUINEVERE. What is it all women do most desire? Fair Heaven, here am I a woman, with all I love in hazard for the answer, yet I know it not! (*She sees Sir Gawayne in the shadow, and starts, exclaiming, then recognises him, reassured*) Sir Gawayne!

SIR GAWAYNE (*rising*). Madam! Doth aught ail you or the King?

GUINEVERE. Finding my lord restless and almost out of his mind, I gave him a potion of simples by which he fell on sleep! But I . . . I cannot rest for sorrow, when, or ever the morrow is overpassed, we may all be chased from our lands and made to yield to a great mighty and outrageous giant!

SIR GAWAYNE (*polishing vigourously*). It shall go hard with the knavish churl or ever he carries out his foul intent, I warrant you, madam!

GUINEVERE. Ah, dear nephew, if it were a matter of prowess, then should we be making great joy and feasting! But how can fair chivalry prevail against the wicked crafts of sorcery? [*Again the knock at the door is heard. Both start and exclaim. The Shadow appears again at the window.*]

THE VOICE. Who dwell herein, I pray you of your charity unshut the door!

GUINEVERE. A woman! Seeking shelter!

SIR KAY (*waking, and realising the state of affairs*). Madam, I pray you, withhold, for well am I sure it is no woman!

THE VOICE. For the love of Heaven I pray you give me entertainment here!

GUINEVERE. A very gentlewoman! A well-languaged lady!

SIR KAY. An enchanter and multiplier of subtile words!

SIR GAWAYNE (*looking at the reflection in his shield*). Oh, but young and passing fair!

SIR KAY (*in desperation*). A serpent! The divil in woman's semblance!

GUINEVERE. Now in truth, Sir Kay, you are the shamefulest knight of your tongue that now is living in the world, and an ye do not yourself unshut the door to this poor wight then will I myself!

SIR KAY. On your own head be it, then! . . . (*Strides to the door and throws it wide*) Who stands without, enter, by ordinance of the Queen! And under protest from the Seneschal! (*All watch with interest, Sir Kay crossing himself, as the Stranger enters, showing herself to be a woman, bent and hobbling, close-muffled in scarlet cloak and hood. Sir Gawayne starts, realising that appearances have deceived him. Sir Kay mutters, mimicking the other*) O passing young and peerless fair!

[*All hang back, slightly fearful, scrutinising the Stranger.*]

GUINEVERE (*to Sir Kay*). This is no beggar asking alms! I charge you, Sir Kay, speak fair to her, and ask her who she may be, whence come, and on what errand?

SIR KAY. Pray, fair damosel, of what kin come ye, and by what name may we know ye, and wherefore do you honour our poor Court with your gracious presence?

THE STRANGER. Sir Kay, ye shall hold me excused, for not to you will I discover my blood, my name, and wherefore I am come!

GUINEVERE. Gawayne, do you greet her and question her in seemly sort!

SIR GAWAYNE. Lady, I pray you tell us, who may ye be, and whence, and on what cause hither come?

THE STRANGER. Full fain will I answer you, Sir Gawayne! I come of a strange country, and I am hight Déliverance La Belle Pilgrim, and I bring you a great reward because you knew me to be young and passing fair!

SIR KAY (*laughs, scoffing*). Déliverance La Belle Pilgrim! Now on my head . . .

GUINEVERE. Peace, Sir Kay! A truce to your mockage and scornings! . . . 'Tis but a poor daffish witless wight! (*She advances hospitably*) Whoever ye be, ye are right heartily welcome! Give place, Gawayne, the hearth hereby! And you, gentle Knight Seneschal, let bring refreshing of good meats and drinks!

SIR KAY. Now on my head, let beggars find sustenance in the kitching, nor seek to fare with great pride and bobbance among

their betters! . . . Or let Sir Gawayne serve his lovely damosel!

SIR GAWAYNE. Beware what thou sayest in disworship of me,
or . . .

SIR KAY. What, are ye not upon covenant sworn never to refuse courtesy to lady or gentlewoman?

SIR GAWAYNE. Now sith ye have such despite of me I require ye to joust with me!

SIR KAY. Oh, an ye seek an adventure you will find me soonly ready!

GUINEVERE. Fie upon you both! Sir Kay, for the love of Heaven and the high order of knighthood forbear! Gawayne, hold thee still and say nothing!

SIR GAWAYNE. But, madam, an I revenge my fellow he will say dishonour of me!

SIR KAY. I never was proved coward of none earthly knight in all my life!

GUINEVERE. I beseech of you both, in the peril in which we now stand, to be friends!

SIR KAY (*reluctantly yielding*). I will hold you excused!
[*To the other Knight.*]

SIR GAWAYNE (*equally reluctant*). All is pardoned on my part!

SIR KAY (*with gruff friendliness, laughs*). The lion is of a more gentler nature than his roaring would beseem!

SIR GAWAYNE. In my heart I thought not amiss against ye!

THE STRANGER (*to the Queen*). Madam, I thank you of your great goodness to me! In recompensation I may do you some service! I need not meat nor drink. My errand is with the King! I crave speech with the King!

GUINEVERE (*surprised*). With the King?

SIR KAY (*whispers, to the Queen*). 'Ware, now! 'tis the eve of All-Hallowmass!

GUINEVERE. Speech with the King! Good dame, this would be a simple asking, but my lord is now on sleep! Because he was restless and full of heaviness I gave him a potion, so that he will not awake till dawning! Not within three hours!

THE STRANGER. Arthur wakens . . . anon he comes this way!

SIR KAY. Mark well my words, a sorcerous witch!

[*At this moment Arthur enters slowly, as if in a trance. All exclaim.*

GUINEVERE (*goes to the King*). Dear love, I left ye soundly sleeping!

ARTHUR (*waking fully, with a start*). Guinevere! I had a marvellous vision, but it lacks interpretation! I dreamed one came knocking on this door . . . a damosel passing young and of peerless loveliness who called herself Déliverance La Belle Pilgrim . . . (*He breaks off with a start and an exclamation, seeing the Stranger, saying*) By the faith of my body, 'tis the loathly lady!

THE STRANGER. God keep ye, Arthur!

ARTHUR. God keep ye, dame! (*To the others he explains in an undertone*) 'Tis a witless wight that I encountered in the forest, saying her prayers between an oak and an holly tree!

THE STRANGER. Because of your bounty ye gave me alms and proffered me aid when I called after ye as I sat between oak and holly tree, I am come to do ye a service, so that ye shall be glad that ye ever showed me goodness! . . . I would have speech with ye in privy!

[*The others seem about to protest against this.*

ARTHUR. Whatsomever ye would say, may not this be said in open audience?

THE STRANGER (*shakes her head*). So would it lose its helping virtue!

ARTHUR (*to the others*). Then, avoid, a little while! I pray you all, avoid! (*To the Queen*) Fear naught, dear love! An aged woman of an hundred winters, who knows but she may expound my vision, and discover to me what all women do most desire!

[*Sir Gawayne gives his hand to Guinevere and leads her away.*

SIR KAY (*following, grumbling*). The original serpent! The divil himself!

THE STRANGER. Sir, the signification of your dream is this: the dragon betokeneth the giant, being right horrible and

abominable, whose peer for outrageousness ye never saw in all your days, and before the dawning will he come knocking on your doors to claim his forfeit, and unless ye make conditions with me for the true answer to his rede . . .

[At this juncture a terrible roaring is heard without, also resounding blows on the door. The Queen and the two Knights come in running, crying, "The Giant! The Giant!"

GUINEVERE *(at the window)*. Oh, an outrageous churl seven times the height of mortal man, and spitting flames of fire from his monstrous mouth!

SIR KAY *(running about, shouting)*. Awake! Awake! Ho, there, and here, awake! Lazy larks, ye ought to be ashamed so to sleep when knights have ado in the field!

SIR GAWAYNE *(also calling)*. Awake, all men of arms! Ho, to the defence!

[Great confusion prevails. People come running from all sides; meanwhile the loud knocking and shouting is heard at intervals.

THE STRANGER. In vain! Arms profit ye naught! He has ye at a vantage!

THE GIANT *(outside)*. How now, King Arthur! What is it that all women do most desire?

ARTHUR. O help me, Heaven! What is it that all women do most desire?

THE STRANGER. That well can I tell to ye!

ARTHUR *(turning to her)*. How now, dame? Beware what thou sayest, for thou speakest a great word!

THE STRANGER. Sir, if God give me grace that I may speed you well, delivering you from this peril, in recompensation will ye give me a reward that I will ask of ye?

ARTHUR. Certainly, so that it be not unreasonably asked, and may be honourably granted. . . .

THE STRANGER. That is well said!

ARTHUR. Speak, then. Name your petition!

THE STRANGER. I will ask my gift when I see my time!

ARTHUR. Now, by my faith, but this is emprising an adventure in the dark!

THE GIANT (*without*). Arthur, for the second time of asking, what is it that all women do most desire?

[*This produces great general consternation.*]

THE STRANGER. Arthur, for the second time of asking will ye entreat with me?

GUINEVERE. Oh, my dear lord, for the love of Heaven, whatsoever boon the dame seeketh, that grant to her, for there is none other remedy in the peril we are in!

[*The Giant knocks louder than ever.*]

SIR GRIFLET (*runs forward with sword and shield*). How, now, varlet! (*To his former fellow-Page*) Attend me! Ho, now! On to the assay!

[*The doughty Child is restrained by a fat Gentlewoman.*]

THE STRANGER. Fools, fools! Your pains and preparations are vain, for the deed shall never be achieved but by me!

GUINEVERE (*again beseeching the King who still demurs*). Dear love, bethink you of all that is in jeopardy: your kingdom, your life, and me, your Queen!

ARTHUR (*considering the Stranger*). Now, my heart giveth me to thee greatly that thou art come on a good errand, and greatly my conceit faileth me but thou shalt prove our true deliverance! Therefore . . .

THE STRANGER. Ye will grant my boon? Upon covenant . . . Sworn upon a book?

ARTHUR. By the faith of my body and the Holy Rood!

THE STRANGER. Then . . .

[*Going to Arthur she whispers in his ear.*]

THE GIANT (*without*). Arthur, for the third time of asking . . .

ARTHUR (*breaking into immoderate mirth, on hearing the Stranger's whispered communication*). Oh, ho, ho! Let blow! Let blow! (*While speaking he hastens to the window, the while horns are blown and great excitement prevails*) Hark ye, varlet! Learn now from Arthur the true answer to your rede: What is it that all women do most desire? (*There is an expectant hush, as the King pauses before announcing*) Their own sweet will, that they may do in all things as they list! [*Immoderate laughter seizes the assemblage, and all repeat.*]

ALL (*stamping about and slapping knees, etc.*). Oh, aye! All women do most desire their own sweet will, that they may do in all things as they list!

THE GIANT (*without, unable to believe his ears*). Eh? Eh? What word do I hear?

ALL (*shouting in concert and carefully syllabbling*). All women most desire their own sweet will that they may do in all things as they list!

[*At this the Giant utters a mighty roar of wrath and frustration, and falls to the ground with a tremendous thud; lies there groaning, and obviously writhing, a short space; then with one final yell gives up the ghost, all, meantime, mocking and with ejaculations recording the phases of his passing: "Aha, now! How like you that! . . . Mark how he flames and smokes with wrath! . . . Oh, what a fall! Almost he brings down the castle! . . . Hear him groan! . . . Ah, fellow; that wraths you finely! . . . Now he dies! He dies! He gives up the ghost!"*] *They all dance about, exulting.*

GUINEVERE (*falling on Arthur's neck*). Saved! Now am I more gladder than I ever was! Oh, my dear love! Mercifully saved!

ARTHUR (*embracing her*). Aye, saved indeed, give laudings and praisings unto God, and His messenger, La Belle Pilgrim Déliverance!

GUINEVERE. Aye, soothly! And now let us put aside all sorrowful thoughts and speak of rejoicing! . . . Sir Kay, good Knight Seneschal, let make a great feast! Let there be harping and minstrelsy! . . . Let ceremony be overpassed, and all make good cheer!

ALL (*excited*). Aye; a feast! A feast!

[*Harpings and song are heard in the banqueting-hall, and in joyous confusion the Lords and Ladies repair thither.*

ARTHUR (*offering his hand to the Stranger*). Lady!

THE STRANGER. First, Sir King, as I have done well by ye and holpen ye out of the peril in which ye stood, I require of ye my reward!

ARTHUR. Require or desire of me anything, dame! I wot not

what your will is, but howbeit I promised ye largely, whatsoever ye demand ye shall have it without any fail!

THE STRANGER. Then do I ask a noble knight and full of prowess to take and wed me unto his wife!

ARTHUR AND GUINEVERE (*start, amazed*). Good dame! What words are these?

ARTHUR. Ye ask a Knight for husband! Now, on my head ———!

GUINEVERE. A damosel of an hundred years of age, would ye not do better to let make yourself a nun, and wear white clothes and black, and end your days in alms' deeds and prayers and fastings in an abbey?

THE STRANGER. I require upon covenant that ye grant my will!

ARTHUR. Aye, dame; what the King hath promised on his avows shall not be gainsayed! . . . Ho, Sir Knights: Sir Kay, Sir Bors and Sir Bleoberis, Sir Gawayne and Sir Meliogrance, and all the worshipful company! (*The Knights come hastening from the banqueting-hall, the Ladies also*) Which of ye will emprise an adventure of passing peril? (*The Knights press forward eagerly, saying: "I, Sir King! . . . Sir, I am your fellow! . . . Oh, my liege, choose me! . . . Nay, then; me!" The King, however, finds it hard to break the news*) It is required of us upon covenant, in recompensation for our deliverance that one of ye . . . Oh, how can I say the word! . . . that one of ye shall take and wed this dame unto his wife! [*A horrified exclamation goes up from the Knights on this, while the Ladies seem inclined to laugh.*]

SIR BORS. Is not this questing in the dark? Will not the lady show us her visage?

ARTHUR. Unwimple your visage, dame!
{*Turning her face to the window, the Stranger raises her hood for a few seconds. All crowd forward to gaze on her, then turn away, the men with suppressed horror and the women with ill-suppressed mirth. Exclamations rise from all sides: "Oh, what an unlovely lady! . . . By my soul, a loathly lady!"*}

SIR MELIOGRANCE (*his voice quaking with fear*). Is there no

way but this? Leaver would I shed the best blood of my body than . . . than . . .

[Breaks off, stammering, not wishing to be rude.]

ARTHUR. There is none other way!

SIR BORS. I am hors de combat! Already is my troth plighted to . . . to . . . to several ladies!

SIR BLEOBERIS (*hastily*). And mine! To the same ladies!

THE OTHER KNIGHTS. Cowards! Cowards!

SIR GRIFLET (*runs forward and casts himself at Arthur's feet*).

Sir, I never yet applied me to be married, but an it please ye, I will win worship in this wise!

[All the Ladies murmur admiringly, "Gallant child!"]

ARTHUR. Rise, Sir Griflet! This adventure is for your elders . . . your betters could not be! . . . Sir Kay . . .

SIR KAY (*hurriedly*). This is matter for Sir Gawayne! (*This is greeted with a slight general exclamation; the Knight continues*) For the slaying of a lady by misadventure and smiting off her head is he not sworn upon the Four Evangelists never to refuse courtesy to lady ne gentlewoman so long as he shall live?

[All the Knights heartily assent to this.]

SIR GAWAYNE. Now by faith of my body . . .

ALL THE KNIGHTS (*hurriedly*). Aye! Sir Gawayne is the fellow for this adventure!

GUINEVERE (*imploring, hands out to him*). Dear nephew . . . for the love of the high order of knighthood, assent to this, I beseech ye!

SIR GAWAYNE (*after a pause*). I assent me!

[A sigh of relief goes up from all sides.]

ARTHUR. Truly, nephew, ye have a mighty heart! (*He presents the Stranger to the Knight*) Take her, and God be your speed!

GUINEVERE (*to the assembled people*). Avoid! Avoid! Together will they be more at their hearts' ease! (*All go. The Queen continues, addressing the Stranger*) Lady, we will make ready in the goodliest wise that may be devised for the betrothal feast!

[*She and the King also go. Left together Gawayne and Déliverance gaze on one another; then, involuntarily, the young man turns away and covers his face with his hands. He then resumes his interrupted task of polishing his shield. The Lady goes to him with a brisker step than we have yet seen her employ, and touches him on the shoulder. With a start and an ejaculation he looks up at her hopefully.*

SIR GAWAYNE. Gramercy! The face in the shield! . . . Ah! (*He sighs heavily*) 'Twas but a trick of fantasy! Woven of moonlight and dawn!

[*He goes on polishing.*

DÉLIVERANCE. Pluck up heart. All may yet be well!

SIR GAWAYNE. All is well, madam. (*He rises*) An ye have no commands for me I will go make me ready in seemly sort for our betrothal!

DÉLIVERANCE. Rather abide, and suffer me to do thankings unto thee, for much have ye done for me! An ye wist how ye have holpen a dolourous lady!

SIR GAWAYNE. I but stand upon my knighthood, madam! (*He is about to go, when there enters, confronting him, a young and gallant Knight, in full armour. Gawayne stops short, staring at him*) Now, by my head . . . the face I saw in my shield! (*He passes a hand over his puzzled brow*) Of whence be ye, and how called?

THE KNIGHT [DÉLIVERÉ]. I am extract of noble blood. I am hight Déliveré. I am brother to this lady!

SIR GAWAYNE. Brother to . . . !

[*He looks from one to the other, incredulous.*

DÉLIVERÉ (*corroborating his own assertion*). To Déliverance La Belle Pilgrim!

SIR GAWAYNE. Now by my head you speak a great wonder!

DÉLIVERÉ. By the crafts of sorcery I was turned into the outrageous giant, keeping the evil customs whereby Arthur and his Court were put in jeopard! My sister alone knew the true answer to my rede, but none could learn it or ever a worshipful knight should promise to take and wed her unto his wife! In this ye stand a proved knight of matchless chiv-

alry! But an ye would save yourself unshamed from this marriage, come and joust with me!

SIR GAWAYNE (*with a cry of joy*). Now Heaven be praised, right glad and blithe am I, for liefer an hundred times would I die with fighting worship than live with wedded woe! Come, Sir Knight, to the assay, and spare me not, for I warn thee I will not spare thee! Come and prove who will be first to say Ho! (*Déliverance, who has hobbled back to the hearth, cowers in her chair, moaning, "Now am I the wofullest lady of the world!"*) Now wherefore this dolourous moaning?

DÉLIVERANCE. I require thee, good Knight, as thou art a gentleman, not to gainsay your avows to me!

SIR GAWAYNE (*pauses irresolute*). Now was ever knight in such plight, between fire and water as it might be!

DÉLIVERÉ. Coward! Coward!

SIR GAWAYNE (*starting to go to him*). Now by the faith of my body never will I yield me nor say the loth word!

DÉLIVERANCE. Traitor! Traitor!

SIR GAWAYNE (*stopping short*). Now by the Four Evangelists . . . (*He takes a sudden decision, and goes toward his bride*) Lady, love is free in himself, and never will be bound, but I shall be your servant and knight in right and wrong, and I shall never fail you to do as much as a knight may do, and I promise you faithfully that I shall be all the days of my life your knight!

DÉLIVERÉ. Coward!

SIR GAWAYNE. Not so, Sir Déliveré, for, God wot, I have chosen the more perilous part!

DÉLIVERANCE. Now this gladdeth well my heart, for so have ye delivered me from the bondage of enchantment! Look, Sir Knight! Behold the visage of your bride!

[*Standing erect, and throwing back her hood she discloses the countenance of a young woman of great beauty.*]

SIR GAWAYNE (*with a cry of great joy*). Lady! The damosel I saw in my shield . . . all passing young and peerless fair! . . . Sir Knights and Ladies! (*He goes toward the banquetting-hall, calling*) Come, and witness a great marvel! (*All*

come in, in great excitement, and from the other direction come the King and Queen, with their attendants, bringing a rich robe and sparkling jewels for the bride. Excitedly Sir Gawayne invites their attention to *Déliverance*) Behold my bride . . . the damosel I saw anon, all passing young and peerless fair! [But, even as he had turned from her, *Déliverance* drew her hood over her head, wrapped her mantle, huddling, about her bent shoulders, and relapsed into the form of an aged crone. All look amazed.

SIR KAY (takes her by the arm and turns her toward the light; then bursts into great laughter). By my head, he's clean out of his wits! . . . Passing fair? The loathly lady! [All echo this, and troop off, mocking Sir Gawayne.

GUINEVERE (who with the King remains). The unlovely lady, the loathly lady passing fair? Poor, poor gentleman! He is under the spell of a dolourous enchantment!

ARTHUR. Pray Heaven he may never get well of it!

SIR GAWAYNE (sternly, to his bride). What means this: now young and fair, now old and wizened? This is no stability!

DÉLIVERANCE. Alas, dear love! The spell is still on me, whereby I may be young and fair to you alone, and old and bent in company; or young and fair in company, and old and bent to you alone! It is for you to choose!

SIR GAWAYNE. Oh, what a burden is thrust upon me! Alone with you to enjoy your delectable beauty, and in company to endure the tauntings and mockage of men . . . or in company to have the envy of all for my lovely bride, and alone with you to discover a loathly crone of an hundred years of age!

[He groans, throwing himself into a chair and covering his face.

DÉLIVERÉ (sharply). Choose ye now, or look well to yourself!

SIR GAWAYNE. Leave that, Sir Déliveré! . . . (He goes to *Déliverance*) I give it to thee, for my wedding-gift, the thing that all women do most desire . . . your own will in this affair, to do as you may list!

DÉLIVERANCE (casting aside her mantle and throwing up her arms with a great cry of joy). Oh, laudings and praisings to

Heaven, for now is my cup of happiness brim-filled and running over! . . . Sir Gawayne, ye have passed the third and last test of chivalry, and so have delivered me forever from the crafts of sorcery!

SIR GAWAYNE (*overjoyed, almost in a whisper*). What! Is it true? Ye are all fair for all times, in company and for me alone?

DÉLIVERÉ It is true! She is a full fair maid, good and gentle, and right well taught, so may each love other entirely! [*Arthur and Guinevere, who were standing at a distance, have joined the group, attracted by Déliverance's cry, and now offer their felicitations. Guinevere kisses the bride, and places a jewel in her lovely hair and a chain about her fair neck.*]

ARTHUR (*to the two Servants, who stand at the entrance to the banqueting-hall*). Let blow! Let blow! (*At a bugle blast from these all enter hurriedly. The King addresses them*) Now is greater worship than ever before won to our goodly fellowship, sithence our dear nephew Sir Gawayne hath passed the third and final test of chivalry! [*All exclaim rejoicing.*]

SIR KAY. But . . . where is the loathly lady?

ALL. Aye, where is the unlovely lady . . . the loathly lady?

ARTHUR. Yon stands she, freed forever from the evil spell of sorcery! And by the faith of my body I do think she is the fairest lady of the world but if it were Queen Guinevere!

ABOUT PINKIE AND THE FAIRIES

I only wish that everyone who likes to receive a good letter through the mails might have one from W. Graham Robertson. He lives at Sandhills, Witley, in Surrey, England; and there he draws pictures, writes verses and plays, collects Old English songs, and publishes, now and again, volumes which bear such delectable titles as "A Masque of May Morning", "A Year of Songs for a Baby in a Garden", "The Baby's Day Book", "The Slippers of Cinderella", and "Pinkie and the Fairies."

His two great loves seem to be Old England and children. In his home life he treasures literary association and the comradeship of young neighbours. Every letter it has been my good fortune to have from him contains some trace of this fervour in him. He has been sadly touched, as so many in England have been, by the effects of the World War, and he has a feeling that some of the beauty of England has been killed in the conflict. Here is what he writes:

"The London that I knew and loved (now and then) vanished completely in 1914, and will never return: and the present noisy, unlovely city, full of noisy, mannerless, unlovely people, attracts me not at all.

"Here, in this little land of yesterday, we can still make believe that all is right with the world — but if you wish to see any such remains of Old England, you must come over quickly — they will not last long.

"Here we produce our own 'Children's Plays.' I write them and they are performed under my direction by a troupe of enthusiastic local Infants. . . . We are saddened just now by the departure to school of our Leading Lady after her greatest triumph in 'The Slippers of Cinderella.'

"For the moment I am immersed in a Village Pageant Play which I have written for the lovely old village of Chiddingfold,

four miles from here, on the edge of the weald. It is to be played in June. As nothing has ever happened at Chiddingfold — in spite of its age — the Pageant is a work of pure fiction; but that, of course, must not transpire. Luckily, there are many local legends, and I am able to present a Dragon, Fairies, and a Vision of Saints, with some faint and far-away excuse. The one genuine Fairy Hill in England is here — there are two in Scotland and several in Ireland, but our Hydon Ball is the only English specimen. So, of course, the Elle-maids of Hydon Ball are quite a feature."

After reading "Pinkie and the Fairies", it occurred to me that maybe Mr. Robertson would have, tucked away in his recollection, some fascinating incidents connected with the writing of this fairy play. Certainly it must have been called forth by some charming happenings connected with childhood. I will let him tell the story in his own entertaining way:

" 'Pinkie' — if it had any aim, which I doubt — was an attempt to put upon the stage the passing of a day and a night in the life of an imaginative child; to show the 'workaday world of every day' as seen from a child's point of view.

"The idea of the play grew out of the daily life of a little girl, Marion Melville, whose pet name was 'Binkie.' She was the daughter of my great friend, the late Arthur Melville, the artist, and she lived (like a proper fairy-tale heroine) in a tiny farmhouse at the edge of a wood.

"A little way within the wood was a barrier of wire netting to keep the rabbits out of the garden, and in the barrier was a small wooden gate which — for the baby girl — led to the unknown, and was terribly attractive. To prevent her from straying, I invented the legend that the Rabbit Gate, as it was called, led to Fairyland, and could only be passed by persons over four years old.

"This stratagem worked wonderfully, and kept Binkie within due bounds till she was Four — when I was up against a difficulty. Either she must still be denied passage through the Rabbit Gate — which would be false to tradition — or she must go through the Gate and find Fairyland. And Binkie at Four was remarkably astute, and had more than a suspicion that the whole tale was a fable and only framed to keep her from

the joys of a delightfully muddy and smelly frog pond that lay in the lower woods.

“So I was in desperate case, and had to set to work with a will, and, on her fourth birthday, when the shadows began to fall, and the woods became caverns of mystery, Binkie was led solemnly down to the Rabbit Gate, wholly incredulous and inclined to scoff. But no one can keep up that attitude for long in a twilight wood, and she arrived at the Gate duly chastened. Then we knocked and spoke strange words of conjuration,——

‘Under the Moon and under the Sun,
Will the Gate unclose to a Woman of One?’

and Binkie gasped and clutched me when a tiny Voice from beyond answered, ——

‘Woman of One, it may not be done.’

“We screwed up our courage and spoke the next lines of the spell, ——

‘Under the Green and under the Blue,
Will the Gate unclose to a Woman of Two?’

and the tiny Voice answered again,——

‘Woman of Two, ’tis not for you,’

and so on up to Four, when the Gate swung mysteriously open and Binkie, now much wrought up, passed timidly through.

“Within stood the Guardian of the Gate, a small figure in trailing robes of silver, flower-crowned, and holding a sceptre of purple iris; and while it spoke rhymed words of welcome, there was a sound of distant singing that grew louder and louder, until out from the wood in all directions crept the Fairies, with their pale faces and shadowy hair and glittering green robes; and they clustered round the child and sang to her and danced round her and drew her down a wonderful alleyway where strange golden fruit hung and impossible flowers bloomed and mysterious lights appeared and disappeared; and the last of the daylight faded, and the moon came up through the cop-pice, and suddenly Binkie came out into a clearing and — there were no more Fairies, no more singing,—only the grey woods and a great silence.

"The wonderful adventure of the Fourth Birthday was over. Strangely enough she never expected to meet the Fairies again, but she knew that she had walked with them under the moon, and the wood was the Fairy Wood always. It was rather a dangerous experiment, and, if I had known then what I know now about that wood, I should not have ventured upon it; but the Folk in Green did not appear to resent it, and there were no unpleasant consequences.

"In later life and after 'Tommy' had come on the scene (he was really a cousin, not a brother), I have no doubt that they found their own Fairies in the Fairy Wood — but of course they did not mention them to *me*.

"I used to make for Binkie a pictured story-book on each of her birthdays, and the first sketch for 'Pinkie and the Fairies'¹ was in one of these productions.

"'Pinkie's' theatrical history began much as usual. The manuscript went about from theater to theater, and found few friends for more than a year; then it came into Sir Herbert Tree's hands, and he took a great fancy to it. I had read it to my friend, Ellen Terry, at her old farmhouse on a summer's evening, and, when she heard that it was to be produced, she wrote to me, and, to my amazement and delight, offered to play 'Aunt Imogen.' So it was produced at His Majesty's with a wonderful 'star' cast, and — I think that's all.

"As to my life in Surrey, about which you ask me, well, — what is there to be said? It's quite uneventful, except from 'Pinkie's' point of view.

"I stray about with Ben, my old, grey sheep dog, and try to paint pictures and to write nonsense. But it's in a wonderful little unspoilt corner of the world, with a curious Faërie atmosphere which many people sense when they visit it. The Fairy Hill is close by, not far off the Ancient Way lies across Surrey by which Chaucer's Pilgrims rode to Canterbury, Bunyan's 'Christian' passed this way towards the Delectable Mountains which lie between me and the sunset, Vanity Fair (Stratford Fair) stretches over many acres of ground below St. Catherine's Chapel by Guildford, and Doubting Castle (now Dowding) is still a name. Guildford, our big market town, was once Astolat, where Elaine tended Launcelot, and

¹ In the Heinemann (London) edition.

the Great Moor of Thursley (Thor's Lea) was sacred to Thor, whose altar stone lies among the marshes.

"It's a land of legend, and still belongs far more to the past than to the present — which suits an obsolete anachronism like me."

Could there be a better Prologue to a fanciful play?

PINKIE AND THE FAIRIES

BY W. GRAHAM ROBERTSON

Dedication

TO A WOMAN OF FIVE

When Grandpapa was young, dear,
The Fairy Gate stood wide;
No veiling cloud-wreath clung, dear,
The Garden Blue to hide;
The Blue Bird lilted there, dear,
No song he left unsung —
The world was very fair, dear,
When Grandpapa was young.

Now Grandpapa is old, dear,
But you must lead the way,
The Fairy flights unfold, dear,
To-day as yesterday.
The rose is just as red, dear,
The daffodil as gold,
Though yours the flower-crowned head, dear,
And Grandpapa is old.

CAST

As originally produced at his Majesty's Theatre, London,
England, December 19, 1908.

AUNT IMOGEN	Miss Ellen Terry
AUNT CAROLINE	Miss Augusta Haviland
UNCLE GREGORY	Mr. Frederick Volpé
MOLLY.	Miss Stella Patrick-Campbell
PINKIE.	Miss Iris Hawkins
TOMMY	Master Philip Tonge
ELF PICKLE	Master Sidney Sherwood
ELF WHISPER	Miss Marjorie Burgess
ELF TWINKLE	Miss Kathleen Yorke
HERALD	Miss H. Gingold
PRINCE FROG	Master William Parke
CINDERELLA	Miss Marie Löhr
THE SLEEPING BEAUTY . . .	Miss Viola Tree
BEAUTY	Miss Winifred Beech
THE BEAST	Mr. Walter Creighton
JACK THE GIANT KILLER . .	Master Francis Walker
JACK OF THE BEANSTALK . .	Master Frank Varna
QUEEN OF THE FAIRIES . .	A YOUNG LADY (who makes her first appearance on any stage).

The Music composed by Mr. Frederic Norton

ACT I

EVENING IN THE GARDEN

ACT II

NIGHT IN THE WOOD

ACT III

MORNING IN THE GARDEN

(Some of the Lyrics are omitted in the performance)

PERSONS OF THE PLAY

Grown-ups.

AUNT CAROLINE.

AUNT IMOGEN.

UNCLE GREGORY.

MOLLY.

Children.

PINKIE.

TOMMY.

Fairies.

ELF PICKLE.

ELF WHISPER.

ELF TWINKLE.

A FAIRY HERALD.

THE QUEEN OF THE FAIRIES.

Folk of Fairy Tale.

CINDERELLA.

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY.

BEAUTY.

THE BEAST.

JACK THE GIANT KILLER.

JACK OF THE BEANSTALK.

Gardener, Telegraph Boy, Fairies, Frogs, Squirrels, etc.

ACT I

EVENING IN THE GARDEN

A Prelude of a Pastoral character heralds the rise of the curtain. Into it gradually steal the notes of a piano, and, as the scene is disclosed, it becomes painfully apparent that some one is obliging with five-finger exercises, and doing so very badly. The strains issue from a small, old-fashioned house standing on a low terrace whence a few steps lead down into the garden. From a gate among trees a path leads to the house. A thick wood surrounds the garden.

The Prelude struggles with the piano for a while, but is finally worsted and ceases. The exercise continues in triumph, and a plaintive voice within the house counts: "One and two and three and — O bother! — One and two and —," etc.

[Enter Tommy aimlessly looking for something.]

TOMMY. Pinkie! *(The exercises continue)* Pinkie!!!

[The notes falter and cease.]

PINKIE *(within)*. Two and three and — Yes! Well?

TOMMY. Where's the nozzle of the garden hose?

PINKIE. In the shed — isn't it?

TOMMY. No. You had it yesterday as the golden spy-glass of Prince Houssain.

[Pinkie appears at window.]

PINKIE. O, I know then. It's in the dust bin. That was the royal palace — don't you remember? Why? Who wants it?

TOMMY. Mr. Irons. He's awfully cross about it.

PINKIE. Is he in the garden?

TOMMY. No, he's gone with the donkey-cart to fetch Cousin Molly's box.

PINKIE. Gracious! She's coming to-day. I had forgotten!
Tommy!

TOMMY. Yes.

PINKIE. Look down the road and tell me if you see ever such a little bit of Aunt Caroline.

TOMMY (*running to gate*). No, not a bit.

PINKIE. Are you looking right down — as far as the corner?

TOMMY. There's not a scrap of her, nor of Aunt Imogen neither. Uncle Gregory's about somewhere.

[*Pinkie opens window and runs out.*]

PINKIE. He doesn't matter — he's got the paper. I can leave off for a bit. Tommy — about Cousin Molly.

TOMMY. What?

PINKIE. Well, what are we to do with her?

TOMMY. We sha'n't have anything to do with her. She'll be a Grown-up, won't she?

PINKIE. I'm afraid she won't — quite. I'm afraid she'll be sort of half and half. Do you remember the Cromley girls?

TOMMY. Pigs!

PINKIE. O, Pigs!! Tommy! Suppose she's like that.

TOMMY. A sneak, you mean?

[*Pinkie nods. A dismal pause.*]

TOMMY. What's she coming here for?

PINKIE. She's been sent here. She's been doing something bad — or, no, she's been wanting to do something bad.

TOMMY (*approvingly*). Good for her! What?

PINKIE. Get married, I think.

TOMMY. O, only grown-up rot.

PINKIE. Yes. I heard them talking about it. She wants to marry someone — and she isn't to — so she's sent here.

TOMMY. But she can marry someone here just as well as —

PINKIE. Yes, but not *that* someone.

TOMMY. Well, she's not coming here marrying Me, and so I tell her!

PINKIE. Silly! It's just this 'ticular someone — and she mustn't.

TOMMY. How old is she?

PINKIE. Seventeen, I think.

TOMMY. Ever so old.

PINKIE. Yes, but *They* won't think so. And she'll have tea with us — and go for walks with us and — O it will be simply beastly!

TOMMY. And she won't care about anything we do because she'll really be a Grown-up. Isn't it queer that they never care to have any fun?

PINKIE. Yes, when they can do just everything they like — there they sit and do nothing.

TOMMY. With their best clothes on. We sha'n't be like that when we're grown up, shall we?

PINKIE. O, I do hope we sha'n't!

DUET

PINKIE.

When I am a Grown-up Lady
I'll never wear Sunday frocks,
But my holland (the brown) with the tucks let down
Without any shoes or socks.
And my oldest hat that was sat upon flat
And sank in the pond and ran.
When I am a Grown-up Lady, you know,
And you are a Grown-up Man.

PINKIE (*with Tommy*).

O my eye! The things we'll do!
We'll do as we like on a private plan,
When I am a Grown-up Lady and you
Are a Grown-up Gentleman.

TOMMY (*with Pinkie*).

O my eye! The days will fly!
We'll do as we like on a private plan,
When you are a Grown-up Lady and I
Am a Grown-up Gentleman.

TOMMY. I'll keep white mice in the dining-room!

PINKIE. I'll take my rabbit to bed!

TOMMY.

And what a relief to drop mutton and beef

And have strawberry ice instead!

I'll drive everywhere with a spirited pair

Which perhaps you may not enjoy.

PINKIE.

But I mean to start in the grocer's cart

With the grown-up grocer's boy.

BOTH.

O my buttons and O my eye!

We'll do as we like as of course we can.

And the bands will play and the pigs will fly

When I am (you are) a Lady in Bye and Bye,

And you are (I am) a Grown-up Man.

[As they dance to refrain the garden gate clicks.]

PINKIE. S—t! There's the garden gate!

[Enter Mr. Irons through gate with box.]

TOMMY. It's Molly's box.

PINKIE. Mr. Irons! Mr. Irons! Are they coming? Where are they?

[Mr. Irons points over his shoulder. Tommy joins him.]

PINKIE. They're walking up. O my exercises! Quick! Quick!

[She dashes towards the house.]

TOMMY. Pinkie, it isn't in the dust-bin! He's looked there.

PINKIE. Look in the pig-tub then, silly! Dear! How helpless men are!

[Exit Pinkie tumultuously into house. The exercises recommence, and the Orchestra from their motif gradually evolves a solemn march, slowly increasing in volume and heralding the approach of the Grown-ups. Mr. Irons disappears behind the house with the box.]

TOMMY. Pinkie!

PINKIE (*from within*). S-s-st! Here they come.

[*Enter processionally by the gate Aunt Caroline, Aunt Imogen, and Molly. The Aunts conduct Molly round the garden.*]

PROCESSIONAL CHANT

CAROLINE. Here you see our homely cot —

IMOGEN. Latticed casement! Latticed casement!

CAROLINE. When we came we found dry rot —

IMOGEN. In the basement. In the basement.

CAROLINE. Then of course the kitchen sink —

IMOGEN. Something frightful! Something frightful!

CAROLINE. Yet the place is now, I think —

IMOGEN. Most delightful! Most delightful!

AUNTS.

East or North or South or West,

Though you travel, though you travel, —

When you come to make your nest,

See the soil is of the best.

Build on gravel — build on gravel.

CAROLINE. Here and there I made a change.

IMOGEN. Quite judicious! Quite judicious!

CAROLINE. Cook dislikes an open range.

IMOGEN. So capricious! So capricious!

CAROLINE. Stable roof was far from sound —

IMOGEN. Keen detective! Keen detective!

CAROLINE. And the drainage too I found —

IMOGEN. Most defective! Most defective!

AUNTS. East or North or South or West [*etc.*].

CAROLINE. Hot and cold all now expect,

IMOGEN (*tenderly*). Restless toiler! Restless toiler!

CAROLINE. So the taps upstairs connect —

IMOGEN. With the boiler! With the boiler!

CAROLINE. Ball cocks stay the cistern's flow —

IMOGEN. When it's quite full — when it's quite full —

CAROLINE. So the place is now, you know —

IMOGEN. Most delightful! Most delightful!

AUNTS.

Search the world from East to West,

Every nation, every nation,

Sea-girt Britain stands confess'd

Queen of latest and of best

Sanitation — sanitation.

CAROLINE. Well, Molly child, so here you are.

MOLLY. Yes, Aunt Caroline.

IMOGEN. So delighted to have you with us, dear child.

MOLLY. Thank you, Aunt Imogen.

CAROLINE. Is that the sort of thing young girls are wearing in Town just now?

MOLLY. I — I think so, Aunt Caroline.

CAROLINE. H'mm!

IMOGEN. You mean you think it will not wash, Caroline?

CAROLINE. I did not say so, Imogen.

IMOGEN. Perhaps it is not quite — but never mind, dear child; I will lend you some brown paper patterns — and we're *so* delighted. Where is your Uncle Gregory? He has been *so* looking forward — he'll be *so* delight —
[*Uncle Gregory unexpectedly emerges from a newspaper and a garden chair beneath a tree. He comes forward, blinking uneasily.*]

CAROLINE. Gregory, this is Molly.

IMOGEN. Dear Molly has arrived, Gregory! I told her how delight —

GREGORY. Eh? Er — how de do — Ha, hum.

MOLLY. How do you do, Uncle Gregory?

GREGORY. Eh? Ha — er — Did you bring the evening paper?

MOLLY. No, Uncle Gregory.

GREGORY. Tut, tut.

[*Retires to his chair again.*]

IMOGEN. A rather reserved man, dear, but *so* good. Gregory's heart is so large.

CAROLINE. So's his liver. Sedentary habits are ruining Gregory.

IMOGEN (*hastily*). And here are your little companions, dear — Thomas and — where is Elenour?

TOMMY. Practising.

IMOGEN. Ah yes. Elenour loves her music — we can hardly part her from her piano.

CAROLINE (*calling*). Elenour! Why have you ceased playing?

PINKIE (*from within*). 'Cos my hour's up, Aunt Caroline.

CAROLINE. Come and say How do you do to your cousin.

TOMMY (*gruffly*). De do?

[*Shakes Molly's hand suddenly and violently.*]

PINKIE (*running out of house*). How de do, cousin Molly?

[*Molly shakes hands and murmurs politely — an awkward pause.*]

CAROLINE (*abruptly*). Well, Molly, of course you know that we know all about this nonsense of yours. And we quite agree with your dear parents about it. Engagement, indeed! In my young days —

IMOGEN. — Though of course, dear, your Aunt would even now be considered —

CAROLINE. — in my young days girls had something better to think about than engagements.

IMOGEN. — Though naturally both your Aunt Caroline and I —

CAROLINE (*hurriedly*). So you must please understand that, while you are with us, any letters you may receive from this person —

MOLLY. Not Person, Aunt Caroline.

CAROLINE. — This — er — youth, are to be handed to me unopened, and you will give me your promise to write no letters to him. Your promise, child.

MOLLY. Yes, Aunt Caroline.

[*Caroline nods approvingly and saunters towards the house. Imogen accompanies her.*]

PINKIE (*softly*). Cousin Molly, — I've heard a little about — about things, you know. I'm so sorry. Couldn't you write one little letter? I'll post it.

MOLLY (*sadly but proudly*). No, dear. You heard me promise. I can write no letter, for I have given my word. He would not have me stoop to deceit. I am forced to send a sixpenny telegram.

TOMMY. And I'll give it to Mr. Irons to take on his way home.
[*Caroline enters the house. Imogen, about to accompany her, turns and comes back to Molly.*]

IMOGEN. Dear child! (*Kisses her*) Mamma has told me of your little troubles. Now, let us be *great* friends. You must not think of me as an Aunt, but as a girl friend — will you? — and we will have secrets — shall we? And you shall tell me all about it — all about it, to-morrow.
[*Kisses her again and follows Caroline into house.*]

TOMMY (*suddenly*). Cousin Molly, was Aunt Imogen asking you to tell her “all about it”?

MOLLY (*startled*). No — ye — es ——— What do you mean? All about what?

TOMMY. O — anything. Was she?

MOLLY. Yes, she was.

TOMMY. Then don't. She's worse than the other one. She's a sneak. P'raps she doesn't know it, but she is.

MOLLY (*walking towards house, turns suddenly*). Thank you, Tommy. It was rather decent of you to tell me. I think I like you.

[*Exit into house.*]

TOMMY (*coming to Pinkie*). Well?

PINKIE. Well?

TOMMY. Well — I don't think she's half bad. I rather like her.

PINKIE. I don't mind her. But I don't see what we are going to do with a girl in long frocks and with her hair up. She won't have friends of her own, and we can't introduce her to *our* friends.

TOMMY. The Cromley girls?

PINKIE. No, silly. Not Party friends — our own real friends — in the garden and the woods.

TOMMY. You mean the ——

[*Music until song.*]

PINKIE. S-s-sh!

TOMMY. Why? Nobody's here.

PINKIE. You know they don't like being talked about.

TOMMY. Not to Grown-ups. They don't mind *our* talking about them. Besides, you got that out of a book; they never said we were not to talk about them.

PINKIE. No, but don't you feel that you just mustn't? — to Grown-ups, I mean.

TOMMY. Of course not to Grown-ups. They wouldn't believe you. Why, when they speak of a Fairy Tale they mean something that isn't true.

PINKIE. They really don't believe in — in Them, you know. But I can't think how they can help seeing ——

[Elf Pickle appears, swinging in the tree under which Uncle Gregory sits.]

PICKLE. Me, for instance.

[Elf Whisper emerges from a flower bed.]

WHISPER. —— Or me.

[Elf Twinkle skips down from the terraces.]

TWINKLE. —— Or me, perhaps?

PINKIE. Pickle! Whisper! Twinkle! O Fairies dear, have you come to play with us?

PICKLE (*laughing*). We heard you talking about us.

WHISPER. And so we listened.

TWINKLE. We always do.

PICKLE. And we thought we would just drop in.

[Drops in, almost on the top of Uncle Gregory.]

TOMMY. O take care!

PINKIE. Uncle Gregory!

PICKLE. He won't notice.

PINKIE. No, he never does. Why do they never notice? Can't they see you? Are you all invisible to them?

PICKLE. Invisible? Dear me, no. They see us quite well, only they think they don't. That's all.

PINKIE. But — how ——

PICKLE. Point of view, you know. You see me and say: "That's Fairy Pickle, of course." Gregory sees me — stares

me in the face — and says: “Of course that isn’t Fairy Pickle — that’s a grasshopper.” It’s just point of view.

[The three Fairies link hands and move fantastically as they sing.]

SONG

PICKLE.

Through the world the fairies go —
To and fro.

TWINKLE.

Lightly o’er the dappled grass,
Trip and pass.

WHISPER.

Say the Grown-ups, looking out:
“How the leaves are blown about!
Such a gale looks bad, no doubt,
With a falling glass!”

[Pinkie and Tommy skip forward.]

PINKIE AND TOMMY.

O so old and O so wise!
Learned ears and learned eyes!
Yet they cannot hear or see
Half so much as little we!

WHISPER.

Fairy trumpets in the air
Proudly blare.

TWINKLE.

Elfin pomp of pageantry
Ranges free.

PICKLE.

Cry the Grown-ups in a fright:
“How the Midges hum to-night!
Gracious! How the creatures bite!
There’ll be rain, you’ll see.”

PINKIE AND TOMMY (*as before*).

O so old and O so wise!
Learned ears and learned eyes!

Yet they cannot hear or see
Half so much as little we!

PICKLE.

If the Grown-ups like to see,
Here are we!

WHISPER.

If they only try to hear,
We speak clear.

TWINKLE.

But the Grown-ups, it appears,
Cannot use their eyes and ears,
Though they've had them years and years.
Really rather queer!

PINKIE AND TOMMY.

Muffled ears and blinded eyes —
Could we wish them otherwise?
If they did but hear and see,
O how awkward it might be!

[Fairies laughingly repeat burden, then, as if thoroughly accustomed to each other, sit down with the children on the grass.]

PINKIE. Yes, of course it would be horrid if they saw. But as they don't, they never give us a chance of setting out in quest of adventures.

TOMMY. It's always time for something — meals or lessons or *something*. If we went out into the world to seek our fortune we should be sure to be late for tea.

PINKIE. Tommy did seek his once — all the way to Haslemere. But he never found it, and he had to come back with the fishmonger.

TOMMY. And wasn't there a row when I *got* back!

PICKLE. But you can be the Good little children who are kind to animals and polite to the aged.

WHISPER. And who have pearls and diamonds dropping out of their mouths.

TWINKLE. And who marry Princes and Princesses early in life.

TOMMY (*moodily*). We don't seem much good at that either.

Well now — that old woman yesterday.

PINKIE. Yes. Wasn't she horrid?

TOMMY (*to the Fairies*). You know you can see down the road out of the schoolroom window? (*Fairies nod*) Well, while we were having our dinner I saw an old, old woman all in black sitting on the mile-stone at our gate. Of course, I thought she was a Fairy in disguise.

PINKIE. Well, you *would*, wouldn't you?

TOMMY. So I did the proper thing. I took a plate of semolina pudding and went out and said: "Here, good mother, 'tis all I have" (which wasn't quite true, but I couldn't take the cold boiled beef), and then I said: "Your need is greater than mine" ('cos I'd had *my* dinner, you see), and I slapped down the semolina pudding in her lap. And what do you think? She was as cross as cross! And she said that her name was Lady Fitz-Arquebus of the Mount, and when I said, "O, I beg your pardon, I thought you were the Fairy Queen," she rang the bell and complained.

PICKLE. Dear me, how irregular!

TWINKLE. Quite out of order.

PINKIE. I know. Those things never turn out right. Ann was very cross and disagreeable at tea, so I muttered strange words over the milk-jug and then scattered some drops over her, saying, "Quit thy present form and assume that of a three-legged, cross-eyed cow." But she didn't. I couldn't help feeling rather glad she hadn't, for I don't know how I should have got her down-stairs.

TOMMY. P'raps your strange words were wrong. What did you say?

PINKIE. Something I heard the sweep say. I'm sure it was all right — it was perfectly awful. But Fairy Pickle, dear, do tell us — how *do* you change Gentlemen into Beasts and Ladies into Cats?

PICKLE. Well, Pinkie — we usually wait and let them develop in the natural way.

PINKIE. Develop?

PICKLE. Do you mean to say you have never met a man who was a beast, or a woman who was a cat?

PINKIE. Yes, of course, but ——

PICKLE. Very well then.

[Molly, who has been watching from the window during the last few speeches, now comes out.]

TOMMY. Here's Molly again.

[The Fairies scuttle away like rabbits. Pickle swings again up into the tree.]

MOLLY *(coming down from the terrace)*. Tommy, here's that telegram. Didn't you say Mr. —— Somebody ——

TOMMY. Mr. Irons, the gardener? He'll take it — he's just going home.

MOLLY. He won't forget it, will he? It's very important.

TOMMY. Not he.

MOLLY *(hesitating)*. Tommy — there are no other little boys or girls here, are there?

TOMMY. None besides us. Why?

MOLLY. Because — it was queer — but when I looked out of the window just now I thought I saw three other children playing with you — little children dressed in green.

PINKIE. You *saw* them?

MOLLY. I *thought* I saw them — and yet I felt that perhaps I was seeing them in my head.

PINKIE. Yes, that's how you do see the ——

MOLLY. The what?

PICKLE *(dropping from the tree)*. The Fairies, of course! *(Twinkle and Whisper reappear)* It's all right, children. If she sees, it's all right.

MOLLY. Fairies! But — are you really Fairies? I thought ——

WHISPER. Thought there were no such things. Ah, that comes of living in town.

TWINKLE. And wearing your hair up.

PICKLE. And your skirts down. Ah, how often the last Fairy goes with the last tuck!

MOLLY. But do I see you now just because I've come into the country?

PICKLE. Not altogether. (*Suddenly*) You're rather happy, aren't you?

MOLLY (*shyly*). Rather.

PICKLE. Telegrams and things — eh?

MOLLY. Ye — es.

PICKLE. More ways than one lead to Fairyland. You've taken a short cut.

WHISPER. But town life is certainly against you. What a place!

MOLLY. Oh, I don't know. The shops —

TWINKLE. The shops! Why, could you buy a Seven-leagued-Boot in Bond Street or a Sword of Sharpness in St. James's?

THE THREE FAIRIES. Shops indeed!

SONG

PICKLE.

In the shops of London Town,
Though you range it up and down,
Fairy Gifts are seldom found;
Horns of Elfland all are drowned
By the motors' hoots.
Wishing Caps are out, they say,
Cloaks of Darkness démodés;
Cobblers there would only lose
Stocking Cinderella's Shoes,
Making Puss's Boots.

TWINKLE.

In the shops of London Town
Fairy Goods are going down.
One alone retains its status,
That's the Purse of Fortunatus,
Always full of Gold.
And for this there's such demand,
Very few remain on hand;
So, despite its fascination,
Half the stock is imitation —
So at least I'm told.

WHISPER.

But the shops in fields and woods
Still are selling Fairy Goods.
Underneath the Singing Tree
You may traffic merrily
 With the Elfin Band;
While the Golden Water flows,
Sunbeam-dappled as it goes,
And the Talking Bird of Blue
Tells his tales the summer through,
 Tales of Fairyland.

[*The three Fairies dance round Molly, Pinkie, and Tommy, singing together.*]

FAIRIES. Underneath the Singing Tree, etc.

[*Mr. Irons passes along the path to the gate.*]

TOMMY. There goes Mr. Irons. Good-night, Mr. Irons!

[*Mr. Irons touches his cap.*]

MOLLY. O Tommy, the telegram!

TOMMY. Lucky you thought of it! Mr. Irons — wait a minute. (*To Molly*) It will be sixpence, won't it?

MOLLY. And I haven't a penny. Tommy dear ——?

TOMMY. More have I.

PINKIE. Tommy — in my blue china pig — Aunt Imogen's Curate Fund — you get it out with a hairpin —— Quick!

[*Tommy abstracts hairpin from Molly, and dashes into the house. Pinkie goes up and waits on terrace.*]

PICKLE (*politely to Molly*). You are not thinking of making a long stay, I believe.

MOLLY (*startled*). I — er — what do you mean?

PICKLE. Merely a flying visit — eh?

MOLLY (*indignantly*). You read my telegram!

PICKLE. I wrote your telegram.

MOLLY. Wrote it.

PICKLE. Yes. You were going to put "Waterloo, two-thirty."

MOLLY. So I was. But then I thought ——

PICKLE. Then I suggested ——

MOLLY. No — did you really? Was that *your* idea? Of course the other plan was silly. Enquiries at the station and —

PICKLE (*nodding*). Yes, I know.

[*Re-enter Tommy from the house.*]

TOMMY. Got it! Will you send that as you pass the office Mr. Irons? Good-night.

[*Exit Mr. Irons by the gate with telegram. Tommy and Pinkie stroll down.*]

MOLLY (*to Pickle*). Thank you very much.

PICKLE. Don't mention it. But as you leave so soon we must do our best for you while you are here. You happen to be rather in luck. Do you know what to-day is?

MOLLY. Tuesday.

PICKLE. Day of the month, I mean.

[*Uncle Gregory drops his paper with a rustle, then snores gently.*]

MOLLY. O — how he made me jump!

PINKIE. We can see what to-day is in his paper.

[*They pick up paper.*]

MOLLY. Thirtieth of April.

WHISPER. That's what *you* call it, I suppose.

MOLLY. What do *you* call it?

THE THREE FAIRIES (*speaking together solemnly*). The Eve of May.

PICKLE. It's the Great Night!

WHISPER. The Night of Power!

TWINKLE. You'll see!

TOMMY. We sha'n't see much if it's at night — we shall be in bed.

TWINKLE. But you can get out of bed.

TOMMY. Can we? How about Ann?

PINKIE. And Aunt Caroline?

PICKLE. Fairy Queen always makes arrangements for her Guests. Whoever is invited to the Fairy Party in the Wood to-night will find the way open before him and closed behind him.

- TOMMY. What's the good of its closing behind him?
- TWINKLE. Why, you don't want Ann and Aunt Caroline after you, do you?
- PINKIE. But *we* are not invited to the Fairy Party.
- PICKLE. I'll tell you a secret. You will all be invited — all three of you. I'm expecting the Deputation every minute.
- MOLLY. The Deputation?
- WHISPER. With the Invitation Cards.
- PINKIE. But — a deputation. Who is it deputating to?
- PICKLE. Well, do you suppose it is to Uncle Gregory?
- PINKIE (*suddenly enlightened*). O, it's to me! To me! But I can't receive a deputation like this. (*Tears off her pinafore*) O Whisper, help me. Twinkle!
- [*The Elves help her to make a toilette, Tommy assisting. The gardener's apron serves as train.*]
- MOLLY (*to Pickle*). How queer it all is. I don't understand——
- PICKLE. Don't try. You're under the sun at present, but look — the shadows creep higher and higher, and the wind is blowing from the Mountains of the Moon. Under the moon, it's all different.
- MOLLY. Why?
- PICKLE. Come, you ought to know something of it. What about Upper Mastodon Terrace, West Kensington — under the moon?
- MOLLY. Ah! Yes — lovely!

SONG

Under the Sun

MOLLY.

Under the Sun the road lies straight,
 Dusty, gusty, arid and grey,
 Leading us out by the usual gate,
 Just in the usual way,
 Down to the grocer a bill to pay,
 Or to buy from the baker a bun —
 Ah, Work-a-day World of the Everyday,
 Under the Sun!

Under the Moon the pathway fades,
 Dreamy, gleamy, into the night.
 Chimney-pots tower dark cypress glades,
 In the puddles the stars are white.
 Drowned in a dream of sweet delight,
 They lie in a mystic swoon —
 Ah, wonderful world for a Fancy-flight,
 Under the Moon!

[*During Molly's song daylight slowly begins to fade and turn golden. A long shaft of yellow radiance strikes into the dimness of the wood, turning the tree stems to gold. Pinkie comes down trailing her apron train.*]

PINKIE. There! Now I think I'm prepared to receive a Deputation.

TOMMY. You look prepared to receive Cavalry.

PINKIE. Well, I've never received *anything* before, you see, so I can't be sure of the right way. Besides, Aunt Caroline says you should not make distinctions: you should receive a Deputation as you would receive a — a Dromedary.

MOLLY. But one never *does* receive Dromedaries.

TOMMY. How beastly snobbish! Why not?

WHISPER. Hark! What's that?

TWINKLE. Music!

PICKLE. It's the Deputation! Now then, Pinkie, you are the Person of Importance and stand here. (*Placing her. To Tommy*) You're the Guard of Honour attending her.

MOLLY. And what are we?

PICKLE. We're the excited Populace. Hooray!

MOLLY, WHISPER, AND TWINKLE. Hooray!

[*Fairy music to the rhythm of a march, high, piping, and tremulous, begins to sound and continues throughout this scene. Out of the heart of the golden glow, among the shadows of the wood a little procession advances. A Herald walks first, bearing a scroll. Behind him follows a string of tiny, green-clad Fairies blowing shrill music from flower-trumpets. A few Frogs walk*]

among them and two red Squirrels. *The Procession circles the stage and halts before Pinkie.*

HERALD (*unfolding his scroll*).

These, with all greetings from her Majesty
To Pinkie, Molly, Tommy, severally.

[*Reading.*

“From Wild Wood Bower. The Fairy Queen,
At Home, with dancing on the green,
To-night at moon-rise punctually.

R. S. V. P.”

PINKIE (*through music*). What does that mean?

MOLLY. Répondez s'il vous plait.

PINKIE (*turning shy*). You'd better speak. I don't know
what to say.

MOLLY (*through music*).

At rhyming I'm not an adept,
But I'll venture this short observation:
We all very gladly accept
The Fairy Queen's kind invitation.

PINKIE.

Respectfulest comps from all three.
Signed — Tommy and Molly and Me.

[*The Herald bows low. Pickle, Whisper and Twinkle again cry “Hooray!” and the Procession again circles the stage and disappears into the wood. As it vanishes the dainty Elfin music is gradually engulfed in the growing strains of the Grown-ups' Processional Chant, which — to any intelligent student of Grand Opera — suggests the presence of the Aunts. As the last Fairy of the Deputation passes away into the shadows, Aunts Caroline and Imogen appear on the terrace laden with work-bags and solemnly descend into the garden.*

CAROLINE. On each passing moment we —

IMOGEN. Leave our traces — leave our traces.

CAROLINE. Either Art Embroideree —

IMOGEN (*joyously*). Curates' braces! Curates' braces!

CAROLINE. Or, when silken dalliance cloy,

IMOGEN. Rosebud clusters — rosebud clusters.

CAROLINE. We recapture sterner joys —

IMOGEN. Hemming dusters! Hemming dusters!

TOGETHER.

East and North and South and West,

Ardent trippers, ardent trippers,

Still our Clergy all attest

Britain's daughters work the best

Carpet slippers! Carpet slippers!

[The two seat themselves on either side of Uncle Gregory. Molly still gazes spellbound after the Fairies.]

PICKLE (to the Children). To-night, then — at moonrise — in the wood.

PINKIE. Yes! Yes! And what ought we to wear? Our bests?

PICKLE. Visitors from under the Sun often come in night-gowns, but these are thought a little old-fashioned.

TOMMY. Ah, and those people wake up and find it is all a dream — I know.

PINKIE. And you can't have a really *nice* party in a dream. It gets so mixed. I gave one a few nights ago and — and Camels came to it — and Dustmen — and one of Aunt Imogen's Curates.

WHISPER. Dear me! I don't wonder you considered it mixed! Ah, the Fairy Queen's party on May Eve is a very different affair.

TWINKLE. You had better come as you are, I think. We can smarten you all up a bit when you arrive.

PICKLE. And remember this. You must each come alone. You may meet all your friends in Fairyland, but you must always get there by yourself. Come each alone, and by different ways.

MOLLY. Alone!

PINKIE. By myself?

TOMMY. In the dark?

WHISPER. Of course you need not come unless you like.

THE THREE. O, we will — we will — we want to!

PICKLE. To-night, then.

PINKIE. At moonrise.

MOLLY. In the wood.

PICKLE. And to-night is very near. See the tired shadows stretching themselves as they lie full-length along the grass, and the little white dew men washing the trees and flowers and getting them ready for sleep. Soon will come the Fairy Folk, scattering the world with roses, while the sleepy Sun blushes and blinks himself to bed in the Gardens of the West. And then —

[Lays finger on lips and steals out.]

WHISPER. And then —

[Creeps out, finger on lips.]

TWINKLE. And then —

[Steals out, finger on lips. The Grown-ups, who have been talking in low tones, become excited and audible.]

GREGORY (*thumping his paper*). Now I just ask you, Caroline, what would become of us if the Army and Navy were abolished?

TOMMY (*to Pinkie*). What would?

PINKIE. I don't see that it would make much difference to us.

We get everything from Harrod's.

CAROLINE (*suddenly realising Pinkie's trailing apron*). Come here, Elenour. What is that extraordinary arrangement that you have tied round your waist?

PINKIE. That? — O — (Trying to tear off apron) — That was a little idea of my own, Aunt Caroline, to keep my clean frock from the damp grass. You see — you sit down — so — and there you are. *[Illustrates.]*

CAROLINE. I see. Really rather thoughtful of the child.

[The Grown-ups resume their conversation.]

TOMMY (*in admiration*). I say, Pinkie! That was a Buster if you like!

PINKIE. I don't see that it was exactly a Buster. It *does* keep my frock clean. Look!

[*Sits down violently. The voices of the Grown-ups again rise.*
IMOGEN. Yes, I should always encourage Patriotism — without it, where should we be?

CAROLINE. What precisely do you mean by Patriotism, Imogen?

GREGORY (*with a sniff*). The love of somebody else's country and the very natural wish to acquire it.

BOTH AUNTS. Gregory!

[*They turn upon him. All talk at once. Soft music sounds and the golden glow of the late afternoon sunshine flushes to rose. Out of the shadows steal Fairies robed in rose colour. More and more appear from all sides, pacing rhythmically and filling the garden with sunset glory.*

MOLLY (*listening absently to the Grown-ups*). Does it not seem as if they were talking either a long way off or a long time ago?

PINKIE. Yes. That's 'cos we've been with the Fairies. Grown-ups and every-day things always seem like that for a bit afterwards.

MOLLY (*looking round*). O! Listen! Look! — The Music — the rose-red dancers!

PINKIE. Those are the Sunset Fairies. They sing the day to sleep every evening.

CAROLINE (*with condescension*). Quite a remarkable effect of light this evening, Imogen.

IMOGEN (*with culture*). Ah, but don't you find that Turner spoils one for sunsets? Venice, you know — its cloud-like palaces — its campanili like aspiring flames! So fairy-like! Here I find no poetry, no suggestion.

CAROLINE (*slightly crushed*). Ah, yes — Turner, of course!

PINKIE. What's Turner?

TOMMY. I don't know. But that's how they always go on when the Fairies sing the Sunset Song.

PINKIE. And the Fairies don't seem to mind a bit, poor dears. They'll sing it to them all over again to-morrow. Look how they try to make them hear.

MOLLY. O hush — it's beginning!

[As the Song of Sunset begins, the rose-clad Fairies dance through the garden, waving their gauzy garments. Pickle, Whisper and Twinkle stand, rose-robed, each by a Grown-up, and softly sing their songs. The Aunts work on unheeding; Gregory still reads his paper.]

FINALE

The Song of Sunset

PICKLE.

Day was born a springing lark,
Day must die a nightingale.

WHISPER.

Day arose a kindled spark,
Now he flames on hill and dale.

TWINKLE.

Heap the incense higher still
Till his pyre an altar grows;

PICKLE.

Day was born a Daffodil,
Day dies a Rose.

CHORUS.

Nightingale, with softest trill
Lull him to his long repose,
To his rest beyond the hill;
Day was born a Daffodil,
Day dies a Rose.

[A bell rings. The Grown-ups spring excitedly to their feet.]

CAROLINE.

Hark! Hark! The Note,
The Warning Bell
From brazen throat
Pours forth its knell.

Though suns decline,
Though night clouds lower,
We dine! We dine!
Within the hour!

IMOGEN.

Seek we our bowers, the festal robes indue!
 The elders proud in purple, brave in blue;
 But for the young, lest envious tongues be rife,
 The plain book-muslin of a blameless life!

GREGORY (*solemnly advancing*).

A simple coat
 Of velveteen.
 About my throat
 A collar clean!
 Though incorrect
 In Town, unless
 Our guests object,
 I do not dress.

THE AUNTS (*aside*).

'Twere all in vain
 To chide. Unless
 We entertain
 He does not dress!

[The dance of the Sunset Fairies sweeps forward, blotting out the figures of the Grown-ups.]

FAIRIES.

Nightingale, with softest trill,
 Lull him, lull him to repose,
 To his rest beyond the hill;
 Day was born a Daffodil,
 Day dies a Rose.

[The Grown-ups again emerge from the dancing cloud of rose colour.]

GREGORY.

A simple coat
 Of velveteen!

IMOGEN.

A purple note
 In crêpe de chine!

CAROLINE.

High to the throat,
Black bombazeen —

THE THREE.

We go to don,
To meet anon
When dusk is on
The Soup Tureen!

[They disappear finally among the dancing Fairies. Pinkie, Molly and Tommy, clasping hands, sing softly together.]

PINKIE, MOLLY AND TOMMY.

Bid the day good-bye.
Whisper low.
Sing him Lullabye,
Sweet and slow.
Weary eye must close,
Fleet foot stay.
Day's a faded Rose;
Good-night, Day!

[They are lost in the fairy crowd. Rose-clad Fairies, lining the terrace, raise great branches of pink apple-blossom. The sunset glow deepens.]

PICKLE.

Day arose with roundelay,
Now to rest with lullabye;

WHISPER.

Cradle-wrapped in modest grey
In a purple pomp to die.

TWINKLE.

Day awoke a tiny rill,
Now a flood of fire he flows;

PICKLE.

Day was born a Daffodil,
Day dies a Rose.

FULL CHORUS.

Shadow fingers, cool and grey,
 Draw the curtains of his bed.

Falling roses,
 Fading fires,
 Cooling embers,
 Sinking pyres!

Day is turned to Yesterday.

Dear day is dead.

[The Fairies shake their apple boughs till the air is thick with flying petals. The whole stage glows with ever deepening rose colour into which, during the last chorus, creeps a cold blue, turning rose to amethyst. As the garden gradually fills with violet twilight the curtain falls.]

ACT II

NIGHT IN THE WOOD

After a short Prelude the curtain rises upon almost complete darkness. Here and there a pale blur of night sky shows through clustering boughs sparsely clad with spring leafage. The Prelude develops into a rocking lullaby, and a dim light, glancing downwards, falls upon the Elf Pickle sitting up with a wakeful Daffodil.

SONG

Daffadowndilly

PICKLE.

Daffadowndilly is sad to-night,
 Heigh Ho, Daffadowndilly!
 Sad for the sun and his golden light,
 For the moon is pale and the stars are white
 And the kiss of the dew falls chilly
 Daffadowndilly is nodding his head,
 Shedding a tear as he turns to his bed.
 Heigh Ho!
 Night winds blow
 Over my Daffadowndilly.

Daffadowndilly, the day will rise,
Peep Bo, Daffadowndilly!
Lighting his lamp in the eastern skies,
Fighting the slumber from drowsy-droop eyes,
Warming my Lenten Lily.
Daffadowndilly in robe of gold
King of the meadow his court will hold.
Peep Bo!
Sunbeams glow,
Waking my Daffadowndilly.

*[The light fades, and Pickle and the wakeful Daffodil vanish.
Pinkie's voice calls.]*

PINKIE. Tommy!

[Enter Pinkie, a little dim blot on the darkness.]

TOMMY (*without*). Yes!

PINKIE. Where are you?

TOMMY (*without*). Here!

PINKIE. So am I.

[Enter Tommy, feeling his way.]

TOMMY. Where?

PINKIE. Here. Molly!

MOLLY (*without*). Yes!

TOMMY. Where are you?

MOLLY (*without*). Here.

[Enter Molly cautiously.]

PINKIE. No, you aren't. I'm here.

TOMMY. So am I.

PINKIE. No, you — O, I've got somebody — Tommy! Now
Molly, where are you?

MOLLY (*annoyed*). Here, I tell you.

PINKIE. But you *aren't*. Tommy and I are here. O! is that you?

MOLLY. I think so. Feel me. How dreadfully dark it is!

Which way did you come?

PINKIE. Through the field, very softly, very softly, for the
daisies were all asleep. And the old, old donkey stood with
his head over the gate, listening with his long, long ears.

His ears are so long that he hears the stars shining and the grass growing and the Day after To-morrow coming.

MOLLY. That's a terrible thing.

PINKIE. No. Why?

TOMMY. I came through the yard. The loft door was open and the little angel-mice were flying in and out.

MOLLY. Angel-mice?

TOMMY. Yes — mice with wings.

MOLLY. O — bats. You call them angel-mice? How stupid!

TOMMY. No. Why?

MOLLY. I came through the garden where all the flowers were wet with dew, and a violet looked at me with a big tear in her blue eye. I think she loved a celandine and he was not allowed in the garden. She looked so sad that I kissed her.

PINKIE. That was silly.

MOLLY. No — why?

[*A pause.*]

PINKIE. How still it is. And how the stream talks. All the Water Fairies are coming to the Party — there will be none left to turn Miller Dobson's wheel.

TOMMY. Are we too early? No one has come yet.

PINKIE. I think they are all here. Can't you feel how full the darkness is?

MOLLY. Is that why you are speaking so softly?

PINKIE. Am I? So are you.

MOLLY. Am I?

TOMMY. Listen.

PINKIE. The nightingales! That's how it all begins. Listen.

[*Soft music sounds, and two voices drop down through the darkness.*]

DUET

The Nightingales

1ST VOICE.

Fairies wake
Through the night
Till the light
Break.

2ND VOICE.

Where their gates
Fall ajar
One pale star
Waits.

1ST VOICE.

Dim with dew
One pale star
In the far
Blue

Waits and weeps
While a fair
Elf-Girl there
Sleeps.

2ND VOICE.

Though he call
Naught she hears.
Starry tears
Fall.

BOTH VOICES.

Through and through
Flowers athirst
Drink May's first
Dew.

MOLLY (*dreamily*). "Flowers athirst — drink May's first — dew."

TOMMY. What did you say, Molly?

MOLLY. Nothing — but — there almost seemed words in the nightingale's song.

PINKIE. Molly! Didn't you hear the words?

MOLLY. Yes, I did. But I thought that perhaps I didn't.

TOMMY. Ah, you are almost Grown-up, you see. Come on.

PINKIE. Yes, come on.

MOLLY. Where to? It's so dark in here — I'm afraid of treading on a frog!

TOMMY. O, the frogs take care of themselves!

MANY VOICES. Ach, ach, ach! The frogs take care of themselves.

[Again the dim light strikes down and the three are seen in the midst of a circle of Frogs.]

MOLLY. Ah!!

PINKIE. Don't, Molly. It's rude. The frogs are the beginning of the Party.

THE FROGS. Ach, ach, ach! The frogs are the beginning of the Party.

PINKIE. Never mind, O froggly frogs. She doesn't mean to be rude, but she's getting Grown-up, poor dear.

1ST FROG. Ah, it's the same way with us. As babies we are all intellect, but as our legs grow our heads don't, and we end up as very ordinary creatures — O, very ordinary indeed.

PINKIE (*politely*). O, you shouldn't say that.

1ST FROG. Fact, I assure you.

[Elves Pickle, Whisper and Twinkle run in.]

PICKLE. O froggly frogs, are you ready for the Party? We have come to tie your white ties for you.

FROGS. Ach, ach, ach! Tie our white ties for us!

[The Elves tie bows for the Frogs.]

PINKIE (*clapping her hands*). Now it's all beginning! The Party's beginning!

PICKLE. Yes, it's beginning now. So pleased to see you — and Tommy — and your — er — your elderly friend.

MOLLY (*stiffly*). How do you do? So kind to ask me.

PICKLE (*gravely*). How do you do? Will you know us when we next meet, I wonder?

MOLLY. Why, of course — at least — I don't know. It's all so strange. I see you, and yet I know you are only a green starbeam and your words are the echoes of the wood.

PICKLE. Ah! (*Aside to Twinkle*) The girl will cut us dead to-morrow, Party or no Party.

WHISPER (*suddenly*). Ladies' Cloak Room to the left, please.

PINKIE. But we haven't got any cloaks.

TWINKLE. No, we've got cloaks for you. You don't call that

a dress for a Fairy Party, do you?

[*Pinkie retires, also Tommy.*]

PICKLE (*slyly to Molly*). Is that the sort of thing young girls are wearing in Town just now?

MOLLY (*with a jump*). Did you hear Aunt say that? Wasn't it horrid of her?

PICKLE. Yes. I heard her. She got one of her twinges of rheumatism directly after. I saw to that.

THE FROGS (*skipping round*).

Ach, ach, ach!

Frog in the throat you often meet

With rheumatiz in the legs and feet

Or the back back back!

[*Re-enter Pinkie and Tommy in Fairy raiment.*]

PINKIE. O look at me! Look at me! Did you ever see — O Tommy! How lovely!

TOMMY (*delighted with himself*). Silly rot, I call it. Men don't care for this sort of thing. (*To Whisper*) You haven't got a looking-glass anywhere, have you?

PINKIE. And now for Molly. (*Twinkle puts on Molly's Fairy Cloak*) O Molly, you're splendid! Splendid! Just like a Princess out of a Fairy Tale!

TWINKLE. But she's *in* the Fairy Tale.

PINKIE. Well, she looks splendid.

MOLLY. What do you think of me, Tommy?

TOMMY (*absently*). Splendid! Is mine all right at the back? You might tell a fellow.

FROGS (*playing leap-frog*).

Ach, ach, ach!

Fairy Cloak for a Fairy Guest!

Frogs in chokers looking their best!

Make a back back back!

PINKIE (*dancing with excitement*). Now — is the Party really begun? Are we *at* the Party now?

PICKLE. The Party cannot begin until the Queen comes, and the Queen cannot come before the moon rises.

PINKIE. But when will the Moon rise? When will she?

PICKLE. Hush. We are going to call her.

[The dim light dies down, leaving the stage almost dark. Fairy voices sound from all sides singing the Song of Moonrise.]

FAIRY CHORUS

The Rising of the Moon

SEMI-CHORUS.

Queen of the twilight eyes,
Lady of dusk and of dew,
Come to your kingdom anew,
Rise!

SEMI-CHORUS (*from above*).

Ruler of Destinies,
Swayer of wind and of tide,
Casting your mantle aside,
Rise!

SEMI-CHORUS (*from below*).

Up from the deep of the skies,
Shaking the stars from your hair,
Climbing the clouds as a stair,
Rise!

FULL CHORUS.

Mother of Mysteries,
Over the seas of the night
Fare in your shallop of light,
Loved of the Elf and the Fay,
Sun of their shadowy day,
Rise! Rise!

[During the last chorus the great disk of the moon tops the rim of a distant hill and floats up the sky among the tangle of branches. The stage is seen to be crowded with green-robed Fairies, who stretch thin white arms towards the growing light.]

CHORUS.

Hail! All hail to our Lady pale!
O wan white Queen with the eyes of dew!
For ever you hear your children dear,
Your Fairy Children who cry to you.
None so small but you hear his call,
O mighty Lady, tender and fair;
As over the grass your light feet pass
The stars are twined in your silver hair.

[A horn sounds faintly.]

PICKLE.

The Ivory Gates unclose! The Fairy Queen
Draws near in state to greet the folk in green.
Strike, music, that our liege evoken be
With woven measures and with melody.
Tread we the dance with flutter of restless wings,
With paces rhythmic and quaint posturings!

[The Fairies dance, singing the while.]

THE DANCING FAIRIES.

She comes from the Western Garden,
The Isle of the Evening Star
That drifts in light through the seas of night
Like a rose-flushed nenuphar.
The garden that's dragon-guarded
To-day as in days of old.
The stars in her pathway fall and shoot,
The Hesper Tree is dropping its fruit,
Dropping its burden of gold.

What gift from the Queen of the Fairies?
What boon for this earth of ours?
What treasure-hoard in that Garden stored,
What fragrance of mystic flowers?
The glint of an Apple that's Golden,
The scent of a Rose that's Blue,

And the spray from the Fountain of Youth that clings
In May's first dew to her whispering wings,
These are the gifts that our Lady brings
From the Land where dreams come true.

[During the dance and song there rises slowly from the earth a lofty throne woven of golden lilies. Upon it, still and solemn like a little idol of silver, sits the Queen of the Fairies robed in silver tissue, crowned with a fantastic coronet of dew-spangled flowers, and holding a heavy sceptre of lilies. At the end of dance all the Fairies fall upon their knees, bowing low to the ground. The Queen extends her sceptre with a gracious gesture. Fairies begin passing before her, curtsying and kissing her hand.]

PICKLE (to Pinkie and Molly). Now for the ceremony of Presentation, and then the fun can begin. (To Whisper) Are these the only débutantes?

WHISPER. Yes. The young frogs are not out yet.

PICKLE. Very well. Come along.

PINKIE, MOLLY AND TOMMY (nervously). But what do we do? Do we do anything?

PICKLE. You just kiss hands and pass along. It's quite simple. Now then.

[Hands card to a Fairy Herald who stands by the Queen.]

HERALD (loudly). Pinkie. Presented by Elf Pickle.

[Pinkie approaches the Presence, curtseys elaborately, and retires slowly backwards.]

PINKIE (still backing). Didn't I do it well? Didn't I —
[Falls over a Frog and collapses.]

HERALD. Tommy. Presented by Elf Whisper.

[Tommy advances hurriedly.]

TOMMY. How de do?

[Shakes hands violently with the Queen and retires.]

HERALD. Molly. Presented by Elf Twinkle.

[Molly advances, sinks in a curtsey and raises the Queen's hand to her lips. The Queen retains her hand, looking gravely at her.]

THE QUEEN. Surely, my dear, you are rather old to be wandering about Fairy Land by yourself?

HERALD. Everything is quite regular, your Majesty. She is in the charge of two very capable babies.

QUEEN. Ah, personally conducted. Quite correct. But otherwise she would be over age.

MOLLY. Over age, ma'am.

QUEEN. Too old for a Free Pass to Fairy Land. For children under twelve admission is free.

MOLLY. And after that?

QUEEN (*gravely*). After that — you've got to pay.

MOLLY. And — the price?

QUEEN. Ah — there we are, you see. That's not a child's question. Change the subject.

MOLLY. But surely, ma'am, some quite grown-up people have been to Fairyland. Why, there was Kilmeny — and Thomas the Rhymer — and —

QUEEN (*very gravely*). Yes — they paid. But, for the most part, Grown-ups come as you came. Some of the Children's Free Passes are for Self and Friend. Don't you understand?

MOLLY. I'm afraid, ma'am — not quite.

QUEEN. Really? Then I will explain.

[*She descends from her throne and comes foward.*]

SONG

Babyland and Fairyland

FAIRY QUEEN.

Babyland and Fairyland
Lie so near — so near each other.
By the stretching of a hand
Is the gulf between them spann'd:
Baby Sister, Fairy Brother
Meet and greet upon the strand.

Trickles down Time's golden sand,
Baby Hearts grow Human wholly;

Close the Gates of Fairyland
 And the veil is falling slowly.
 They have lost their sprig of moly
 And they do not understand.

He who still would loose the chain,
 Still unbar the Gates of Faerie,
 Needs must stoop and humbly deign
 Seek the tiny path with pain,
 Tread the way that does not vary.
 Back through Babyland it lies
 To the long-lost Paradise,
 To the Land of Youth again.

*[As the Queen slowly retires and mounts the steps of her throne
 the Fairies softly repeat:]*

Back through Babyland it lies,
 Back to Childhood's Paradise,
 To the Land of Youth again.

[The Queen raises her sceptre and speaks.]

QUEEN.

Now to your elfin sports, my merry throng,
 Fleeting the night with banquet and with song.
 For ever tread we, ere we sup or sing,
 The mystic circles of our Fairy Ring.

TOMMY. No — let's have the banquet first!

PINKIE AND MOLLY. O Tommy — hush!

[The Frog and the Queen dance to solemn music.]

TOMMY. Well, look here. If there's much more of this rotten
 dancing I shall go home.

MOLLY. O Tommy, the elfin revels.

TOMMY. I don't see where the revel comes in. *I'm* not revel-
 ling. And *I* could dance all right if I wanted to. I've been
 to a class.

PINKIE. Yes — but you never got beyond dumb-bell exercises
 because —

[A wild note comes into the music and the Queen calls shrilly.]

QUEEN.

Steady of foot and strong of wing
Must the dancer come to the Fairy Ring!

[Hand in hand with the Frog she moves quickly round the stage.]

FROG.

Froglets, froglets! Follow your king!
For all must dance in the Fairy Ring.

CHORUS.

Yes, all must dance in the Fairy Ring.
Link we together and closely cling
Lest we lose our place in the Fairy Ring,
While the white stars over us swirl and swing
And the moon sweeps on to the moon-setting,
Linked in the whirl of our Fairy Ring.

[Headed by the Queen and the Frog, a string of dancers passes round the stage, gathering numbers as it goes — as in a Farandole. Pinkie, Tommy and Molly are swept into the stream and take their places in the circling train. The music grows faster and faster, and the dancers swing into a great ring, again enclosing a smaller ring which revolves in the opposite direction. Faster and wilder grows the music. Pinkie, Molly and Tommy, borne along in the great outer ring, are rapidly growing breathless.]

PINKIE *(passing in frenzied jumps)*. O — O — O — Please — I can't! O — my shoe!

[She is swept by.]

TOMMY *(whirling past)*. Here — I say — easy on — I — say —

MOLLY *(plunging by in a cascade of hairpins)*. O — O — O — my — hair — pins — O — O —

[Her hair comes down finally and for good, and she disappears. The Fairies suddenly break the ring and are whirled laughing over the stage. Pinkie, Tommy and Molly sit breathless on the ground in the centre, while round them, where lately was the circle of dancers, a ring of little white mushroom tables has sprung up. A Fairy holding a tiny gold cup and plate advances to each table.]

HERALD. Her Majesty is served.

QUEEN. Now, Tommy — this is the part of the Party you like.
(*Tommy overcome by confusion*) You may take me in to supper.

[*With much bustle all find places, some Fairies at tables, others waiting upon them.*]

PINKIE (*overwhelmed by offered dainties*). O thank you — I mean — No thank you — that is — yes, please — O your Majesty! This is my first Real Party!

QUEEN. Really, Pinkie? Then it shall be your very own Party, and you may ask whom you please.

PINKIE. O, thank you, dear — ma'am, I mean. But I don't know anyone to ask.

QUEEN. You surely have many friends in Fairy Tales. Princess Badroulbador — Red Riding Hood — who are your favourites? They would be delighted to come.

PINKIE. That would be lovely, but — could they? These people — they aren't *real* people, you know.

QUEEN. They are the real-est people *I* know.

PINKIE (*persistent*). No, but *real* people, I mean — real, live people.

QUEEN. Now look. Here comes your Uncle Gregory smoking his cigar before shutting up.

PINKIE. Yes, he isn't allowed to smoke indoors.

[*All sit still. Uncle Gregory enters, passes slowly through the midst of the Fairy Banquet, entirely unconscious of his surroundings, and pauses — apparently staring straight at the Fairy Queen.*]

GREGORY. Ha, hum!

[*He saunters slowly across and out.*]

QUEEN. Now — quite candidly speaking — do you consider him real?

PINKIE (*clapping her hands*). I see! I see! No, of course not. I'm real, and you're real, and Tommy, and — perhaps Molly, but I'm not quite sure — but Uncle Gregory — O no!

QUEEN. Not under the moon perhaps?

PINKIE. No, not under the moon. Then, please may I ask dear Cinderella?

[A trampling of horses is heard, and in the dimness of the wood beyond a golden carriage appears. Out of it steps a beautiful lady magnificently dressed.]

HERALD. Her Royal Highness the Princess Cinderella of Silverland.

CINDERELLA *(breathlessly)*. How do you do? *(Hastily sweeps a Court curtsey to the Queen and runs over to Pinkie)* So sweet of you to ask me. Of course, I'm late — I always am. Ah, Godmamma, dear. *(Runs to and picks up a tiny Fairy apparently some five years of age)* How are you? — But I need not ask. How wonderfully you wear! *(To Attendants)* O no, thank you. I've only this moment finished dinner — well, just the least drop in the world then. *(She settles down beside Pinkie and fans herself)* Ah, dear old Fairy Land! How sweet it all looks! I should be here every night of my life, you know — quiet and the Simple Life I just adore — but positively one hasn't a minute.

PINKIE *(rapturously)*. Balls?

CINDERELLA. Balls — banquets — bazaars — foundation stones — my dear, one can hardly turn round — and of course one began so young that one gets just the least bit in the world blasé. O, I should never have gone to that first ball of mine — I wasn't out — the dear girls were perfectly right about it.

MOLLY. The dear girls?

CINDERELLA. My sisters, you know. Such sweet women — you'd love them!

PINKIE. But I thought —

CINDERELLA. Ah, you've been listening to silly stories. No, no, the girls were quite right — and darling Godmother was certainly a little injudicious — weren't you, darling? But she's such an impulsive old dear.

PINKIE. But how I should love to have seen the wonderful fairy gown that you wore at that ball.

CINDERELLA. Well — you might get a hint or two from this

little frock — I've always kept to the same style. Now, the skirt, you see — cut on the bias and gored — (*A clock strikes twelve. Cinderella's gown falls to rags*) O — I beg your pardon! So silly of me. It's becoming a habit. It annoys the Prince dreadfully, but I can't help it. It's nerves, I think.

PINKIE. Never mind, Cinderella, dear. You look just as nice in this dress.

CINDERELLA. O, my dear, a rag! It's really most annoying. It doesn't so much matter here — fairies are very Bohemian; but I assure you the other night we were dining at the Paflagonian Embassy — most particular people — I knew it was one of my bad nights. I said to Peerless, "Now do remember, we *must* leave before midnight." But of course — you know what men are — he didn't remember, and just as I was talking chiffon with the Ambassadors and getting on quite nicely — Bing Bong — Twelve o'clock! — and there I was in my petticoat body!

PINKIE. But the Little Glass Slippers? Do they change too?

CINDERELLA. Ah no! Whoever has danced in the slippers of Cinderella will never lose them. And they never wear out. You should have come in yours to-night.

PINKIE. But I haven't got a pair.

CINDERELLA. Haven't you? If you hadn't you would not be here. Look in the boot-cupboard when you get home.

SONG

The Slippers of Cinderella

Ho, ho! Ho, ho! Ho, ho!
 The high-born ladies are flocking,
 Each foot in a dainty stocking.
 Ho, ho! Ho, ho! Ho, ho!
 But lowly and high are eager to try
 In attic and yard and cellar;

Each maid in the land is longing to stand
In the Slippers of Cinderella.

Ho! Ho! Heel and toe!
Nay, pretty maid, they are not for you.
Your ankle's neat and your stockings are sweet
But you haven't the feet for a Fairy Shoe.

Ho, ho! Ho, ho! Ho, ho!
Comes one with her hair in papers
With a reek of mutton and capers.
Ho, ho! Ho, ho! Ho, ho!
Her skirt too short, with a list to port,
A regular Blowzibella!
Hardly can such but venture to touch
The Slippers of Cinderella.
Ho! Ho! On they go!
A kingdom won and a husband too!
For you never can know how far you'll go
If you've fitted your toe in a Fairy Shoe.

Ho, ho! Ho, ho! Ho, ho!
The cobblers of Faerie bear them
To those who have feet to wear them.
Ho, ho! Ho, ho! Ho, ho!
In earth's dim lair you may seek a pair,
In the moon or in spaces stellar,
While there on the floor at your bedroom door
Lie the Slippers of Cinderella.
Ho! Ho! Blow high, blow low!
Come winter snow or come skies of blue!
You'll tread upon air as through life you fare,
If only you're wearing a Fairy Shoe.

[The Fairies repeat chorus, and Cinderella dances daintily in her little Glass Slippers. At close of dance Fairy Queen beckons Cinderella.]

QUEEN. Now, Princess, we must not allow you to monopolise

the hostess any longer. Come and talk to me. Pinkie, whom else are you asking to the Party?

PINKIE. Let's see. O, I think — yes — Jack of the Beanstalk.

TOMMY. No, Pinkie — Jack the Giant Killer.

CINDERELLA (*on her way to the Queen*). Better ask both, my dear. They're dreadfully jealous of each other. Such uninteresting boys — quite of the People, you know.

PINKIE. Then please, your Majesty, may I ask both?

[A horn sounds without and a shrill voice cries:

Whoever can this trumpet blow
Shall the Giants overthrow.

TOMMY. I call that swagger when he knows there aren't any Giants.

PINKIE. *How* does he know? There might be.

MOLLY. *Might* there? Tommy — shouldn't we — oughtn't we to be going?

TOMMY (*hurt*). I don't see why you're afraid, Molly, with a Man to look after you!

[The horn sounds again, and Jack the Giant Killer appears at back in golden light,—a smart boy in short jerkin and plumed cap. He carries a huge sword and the horn is at his belt. Near the Throne of Fairy Queen a long, ladder-like festoon of leaves and scarlet flowers has descended from above. Down it climbs a boy dressed like Jack the Giant Killer, a golden harp slung on his back.]

HERALD (*announcing Jack the Giant Killer*). Jack of the Beanstalk!

JACK THE GIANT KILLER. Not at all! (*Seeing the other Jack*) O there you are, are you? The usual muddle. It's most annoying.

[Jack of the Beanstalk steps from his beanstalk and comes to Jack the Giant Killer.]

JACK OF THE BEANSTALK. Same here. But you needn't come the Giant Killer over us quite so strong, you know. Take it easy. (*To Herald*) Now, old man, try again. Take your time.

HERALD (*bewildered*). Jack the Giant Stalk — Jack the Bean Killer — er — er ——— (*Desperately*) The Jacks!

JACK OF THE BEANSTALK. Leave it at that.

[*The two Jacks sit down amicably together.*]

QUEEN. Well, Pinkie — what next?

PINKIE. O — what do you think? The White Cat? Puss in Boots and the Marquis of Carabas?

CINDERELLA (*suddenly rising*). Dear, of course I would not interfere with your plans for the world, but if you ask M. de Carabas I must leave. The Prince would never hear of my meeting him again.

PINKIE. Why? Doesn't he like him?

CINDERELLA. Like him? My dear, the man is quite impossible! A mere nobody — as you know — and always claiming other people's property. Directly he met my husband he explained that the Princedom of Silverland was a title which his family had allowed to lapse, but that he was so glad that Peerless had taken it up. But I paid him out. I took him for a long, long drive in my Fairy Coach to a horrid little village I knew of where there was no hotel, and only one shop which sold string and tin-tacks; and when he said it belonged to *him* — as of course he *did* — I stopped the coach and said I was so pleased to have been able to give him a lift home — and he had to get out and walk all the way back. So he doesn't like me much, you see, and Peerless and he won't speak to each other.

PINKIE. Very well, Cinderella dear. Of course, I won't ask anyone you don't —

[*The two Jacks, who have been conversing in low tones, suddenly go for each other. Molly screams, and Pickle, Twinkle and Whisper throw themselves upon the combatants and drag them apart.*]

JACK THE GIANT KILLER. Let me get at him! Just let me get at him; that's all!

JACK OF THE BEAN STALK. Come on then! Let go of me, can't you? — *I'm* not afraid of him!

HERALD. Order! Silence!

[The hubbub continues, all speaking at once.]

QUEEN *(rising and extending her sceptre)*. The Queen commands silence. Now, you two boys, what is the matter?

JACK THE GIANT KILLER. Your Majesty, he said — *(To Pickle)* — yes, he did! You heard him! — he said that he'd undertake to get rid of as many giants as *I* had ever come across with half a tin of Beetle Powder.

[They fling off their jerkins and turn up their shirt sleeves.]

MOLLY. O Tommy! They're going to fight! O, what shall we do?

TOMMY. You get behind me, Molly, and I — and I'll get behind somebody else.

[Shouts of "Order! Shame! Fairies present!" etc.]

CINDERELLA *(to Pinkie)*. O those boys! My nerves! I feel quite upset. Lend me your vinaigrette, dear.

PINKIE. My what?

CINDERELLA. Vinaigrette — you haven't one? Then do, there's a dear, call for the Sleeping Beauty. She'll be so glad to come, and she always quiets people down. She's such a restful woman.

PINKIE *(shouting through the tumult)*. Please, I invite Beauty!

CINDERELLA *(hastily)*. Sleeping Beauty, dear. There's another person of that name. She married the most dreadful creature for his money, and now she pretends it was a love-match. Such absurd affectation!

PINKIE. The Sleeping Beauty!

[The general squabble swells up again for a moment, then a drowsy strain of music creeps into the noise and stills it. The two Jacks, in the act of closing with each other, pause and listen. A Voice sings without.]

The Hushaway Honeydews drip,
The slumberous Hydromel,
From the wild white poppies that bend and dip
Into the Lullaby Well.

[*The combatants separate, and a hush comes over all as a beautiful Lady, gowned in misty greys and dim purples, and crowned with poppies, walks slowly in. In either hand she carries a heavy white poppy, and her sleepy eyes are full of dreams. As in a trance she moves forward and again takes up her song.*

CINDERELLA (*while the Lady walks down the stage*). Here she comes! She's such a dear, but she hardly ever gets asked out. She's a little heavy on hand, and she simply puts an end to dinner conversation.

[*The Lady sings.*

SONG

The Wells of Sleep

As I leaned over the Slumber Well,
Where the wild white poppies grow,
The heart from my bosom slipped and fell
Into the depths below;
And the waters cool of that healing pool
So stilled the throb and the pain
That my heart sank deep in the Wells of Sleep
And never came up again.

For Hushaway Honeydew drips,
The slumberous Hydromel,
From wild white poppies that brush the lips
Of the way-worn pilgrim who stoops and sips
A draught from Lullabye Well.

(*With a long stretch of sleepy arms*)

Ah a-a-a-a-a-ah!

A draught from Lullabye Well.

[*All stretching and yawning repeat chorus, "For Hushaway Honeydew drips," etc.*

So still I drone like a drowsy bee
Where the wild white poppies weep,
And my heart that is drowned looks up to me,
Up through the Waters of Sleep.

Drowned it lies with its dream-dark eyes
 And a face so like mine own,
 Image of me that is held in fee
 By the Dreamland King on his throne.
 And the Hushaway Honeydews drip,
 The slumberous Hydromel,
 Closing the eye and sealing the lip,
 Stilling the frame to the finger tip,
 As the wild white poppy leaves fall and slip
 Into the Lullabye Well.

(Sinking slowly to the ground)

Ah a-a-a-a-a-ah!

Into the Lullabye Well.

[All repeat chorus very softly, "And the Hushaway Honeydews drip," etc. All are nodding, stretching and blinking, on the very verge of sleep.]

CINDERELLA *(languidly marking time with her broom)*. Isn't she a nice, cosy thing? Don't you find her wonderfully soothing? *(No answer from the drowsy company. Loudly)*

I was saying — don't you find her wonderfully soothing?

PINKIE *(with a start)*. Eh? What? O, listen to Tommy snoring! I must shake him.

[Does so vigourously.]

MOLLY *(regarding the Sleeping Beauty with disfavour)*. I can quite understand that at small dinners the Princess would be unpopular.

CINDERELLA. Yes, but she's such a dear. *(Bending over her)* Rosabel, darling, do rouse yourself a little.

SLEEPING BEAUTY *(opening her eyes)*. Where am I? Did someone kiss me?

MOLLY *(primly)*. You are at a Party, Princess, and, if I may be allowed to say so —

CINDERELLA. It's not of the slightest use to snap at her, my dear; she has the temper of a feather bed. *(Raising the Sleeping Beauty)* Come along, darling, and talk to the Queen. She has been asking for you.

MOLLY (*suddenly*). Hush! What's that?

ALL. What?

MOLLY. That noise. There it is again!

PINKIE. I hear it now — like a garden roller walking upstairs.

MOLLY. Yes. It's coming nearer. Some big heavy thing pushing through the brake. Tommy!

[*Edging nervously behind him.*]

TOMMY. Molly! I — I never knew such an Unprotected Female as you! I've been protecting you all the evening, and I've had just about enough of it! What's the use of that Giant Killer chap with his big sword?

PINKIE. Why, of course! He'd just love to rescue us — wouldn't you, Jack?

JACK THE GIANT KILLER. Ye-es. O ye-es. You see, Miss, you put me in a difficulty.

MOLLY (*indignant*). Nothing to the difficulty you put *us* in! Do you mean to say you *won't* rescue us?

JACK OF THE BEANSTALK. You see, Miss, the Giant Killer and I — we're specialists. In fact, we're all specialists here. His licence and mine are for Giants, and if what is coming is a Giant, we'll bag him with pleasure. But suppose it isn't.

JACK THE GIANT KILLER. Yes — suppose, for instance, it's a Dragon. Why, if we so much as touched one there'd be trouble. They're all preserved most carefully for Saint George and More of More Hall.

PICKLE. They're quite right, Pinkie. The Fairy Game Laws are most strict.

PINKIE. Then — Tommy?

TOMMY. Not me. I've got one of my headaches coming on. Besides, last time I wanted to be Launcelot you made me be a damsel in distress. Now you can jolly well stick to Launcelot. See!

ALL (*crowding round*). Hail the Champion! Pinkie, the Champion!

THE QUEEN (*from her throne*). Pinkie, my dear, as it is your Party, I'm really afraid —

PICKLE. Come along, Pinkie, you'll do splendidly. You shall

have Jack the Giant Killer's sword and Jack of the Beanstalk's cap.

THE JACKS. Delighted, Miss, I'm sure.

PINKIE (*rejecting sword*). O no — please. I know Aunt Caroline wouldn't let me play with that.

THE QUEEN.

Needs must the Champion wield the Sword in fight
That ever bringeth Victory to the Right.

PINKIE (*desperately*). But p'raps I'm Wrong. How am I to know? — And then the thing would turn round on me! No sword, thank you! Cinderella, dear, lend me your broom. (*The heavy footsteps, now close at hand, echo through the wood. To Pickle*) Now — what do I say?

PICKLE. O, you know — Monster, I challenge thee to mortal combat!

PINKIE. What's mortal?

WHISPER. Till you're both killed.

PINKIE. I'll leave out mortal. And then?

PICKLE. Then you throw down your glove and —

PINKIE. I know. O my goodness! (*Enter at back a huge hairy Monster*) Do I begin now?

PICKLE. Yes.

PINKIE (*advancing*). Monster, I — what? — O yes — I challenge thee to mor — I mean — to — er — to combat. In token of which behold my — O, I haven't got one!

PICKLE. Never mind! Anything will do. Go on! Go on!

PINKIE. — Behold my shoe!

[*Snatches off her shoe and flings it down. The Monster stares, much puzzled, then picks up shoe.*]

MONSTER (*politely*). Excuse me, Madame, but you've dropped something.

ALL. He has lifted it! He has lifted it!

TOMMY. Now then, Pinkie. Go it, Pinkie!

[*Pinkie assaults the Monster with broom; he trots slowly away from her.*]

ALL. He flies! He flies! Engage! Engage him again!

[*As Pinkie again attacks him, a very pretty young Lady,*

crowned with white roses, rushes in and throws her arms round the Monster.

YOUNG LADY. Algernon! O — don't hurt him! What has he been doing?

PINKIE. We — we didn't quite know what he might be going to do.

QUEEN. The gentleman entering unannounced, we naturally ——

YOUNG LADY. Ah, I see. (*Hands card to Herald*) O, Algernon, how gauche of you!

HERALD (*announcing*). Beauty and the Beast.

CINDERELLA. That woman!

[*Beauty and the Beast bow to the Queen. Pinkie comes to them.*]

PINKIE. O Beauty — O Beast — I'm so sorry! I never thought ——

BEAUTY. Of course not, dear. It was entirely Algernon's fault. Algernon, I am afraid you have really been very gauche indeed. (*To Pinkie*) You see — you asked me to your Party, and as I was not quite ready I told Algernon to go on first and wait for me. And then he comes blundering in by himself! Really, Algernon, you must apologise.

BEAST (*on his knees to Pinkie*). Dear Beauty, will you marry me?

BEAUTY (*sharply*). Don't be silly, Algernon! Such a stupid habit he got into before I accepted him. He had to propose so often. You see, his appearance was against him, poor dear boy.

MOLLY. But I thought he turned into a Beautiful Prince.

BEAUTY. So he does, when you know him. You see, none of you *know* Algernon very well yet.

ALL (*frigidly*). Er — no.

CINDERELLA. And I'm afraid that I must look forward to another opportunity, for really, Pinkie dear, I must be getting on. It's so late, and Johnson, my coachman, can't bear having the mice kept waiting.

SLEEPING BEAUTY. Then we mustn't delay you, dear. But

I'm so glad to have met you again — and you too, Beauty — and the Jacks. In these levelling days we — the Old Guard of Faerie — should stand together, for the sake of Once upon a Time.

CINDERELLA (*preparing for departure*). Now, will some one look for my carriage, please? (*Shouts of "The Princess Cinderella coming out!"*) It's rather interesting. I never know how much of the carriage I shall find after twelve o'clock. I'm quite ashamed to let you see it. (*Looking off*) O, it's shocking to-night. How dreadfully plain Johnson looks — and he's really such a smart coachman. (*The withered half of a huge Pumpkin wobbles in on rickety wheels, drawn by four piebald mice and driven by a large brown rat*) O Johnson, is this the best you can manage for me? (*The Rat touches his hat in apology*) Well, well. Lucky it's fine. The open carriage will be rather pleasant. (*Packs herself into the Pumpkin, her toes sticking out*) Good-bye, dear. I have enjoyed myself. Drive on, Johnson. Good-bye! Good-bye! [*Cinderella in her Pumpkin disappears, waving her handkerchief.*]

PINKIE (*calling after her*). But shall we see you again? Cinderella, de—e—ear! Shall we see —

BEAUTY. See her again? Of course you will. Now we know each other we shall all pop in upon you from time to time — though perhaps you may not always recognise us.

PICKLE. And now, children, you must be getting home yourselves. We must not keep you out too late, although we do not allow Time in Fairyland.

PINKIE. But we sha'n't go back and find that it's twenty years from now — and nettles in the spare bedroom and Aunt Caroline's beard grown in her lap?

PICKLE. Certainly not.

TWINKLE. That sort of thing never happens to invited Guests.

MOLLY (*suddenly to the Queen*). O, your Majesty! There will be no mistake about to-morrow *being* to-morrow, will there? Because I — I have a rather particular engagement.

THE QUEEN. You will find to-morrow waiting for you just as usual, Molly.

TOMMY. But we're not going to wake up in our little white beds and find it's all a dream, are we? That's such a rotten ending.

THE QUEEN. Of course not. That's a Grown-up's ending. Dream, indeed! (*To Sleeping Beauty*) Princess Rosabel, you are going their way. Will you see them home?

SLEEPING BEAUTY. With great pleasure. My dust cloak, please. (*A grey mist rises, which the Sleeping Beauty gathers round herself, Molly, Pinkie and Tommy*) — And if any of the dust gets into your eyes — then close them — close them.

[*Music sounds, and shadows begin to gather over the stage, gradually blotting out all but the crowd of Fairies clustered round the enthroned Queen. As the light fades the Fairies sing.*

CHORUS

Dreamers, passing from us all regretful,
Children of the Day that seek the noon,
Wake upon the morrow half forgetful,
Sun-kissed flowers unmindful of the Moon;

Yet the link between us will not sever,
Knitting mortal world with Fairy clime;
In the Now you found the Never Never
Once upon a time.

(*The Visitors to Fairyland have completely vanished in the shadows. The crowd of Fairies now begins to fade*)

SEMI-CHORUS

Here is but the endless night of Faerie,
Mellow moons that never wax nor wane,
Stars that set not, skies that cannot vary,
All unstirred by wind, unswept by rain.

SEXTETTE

Far from Time, as far from Joy or Sorrow,
Measured by no stroke of mortal chime,
There is no To-day and no To-morrow
Once upon a time.

(All has now disappeared save the figure of the Fairy Queen, enthroned, which shines like a star in the darkness)

TRIO

In the magic hour when night with day mates,
Ere the veiling shadows are withdrawn,
You awhile must leave your Fairy playmates,
Leave them in the darkness of the dawn.

THE QUEEN (*solo*).

Never wholly children of the day, dears,
In your ears the ring of elfin rhyme:
Once to Fairyland you found your way, dears;
Once upon a time.

[The figure of the Queen fades as she sings. As darkness is complete the curtain falls.]

ACT III

MORNING IN THE GARDEN

The Scene is the same as that of Act I, now lit by clear morning sunshine. The only change is that, within the wood where a few patches of bluebells were seen before, is spread a carpet of blue, the flowers lying like blue mist round the boles of the trees.

After a short, chiming Prelude, Pinkie comes from the wood, her hands full of bluebells.

SONG

Bluebell Time

PINKIE.

I thought that the grass was green,
To-day it has all turned blue.
Had anyone told me — even a Queen —
I would not have thought it true.

I wonder if I'm awake.
Those trees never used to grow
Bathing their feet in a deep blue lake.
I can't make it out, you know.

I always thought of the sky
High lifted over my head;
So please can you tell me the reason why
It's under my feet instead?

But the Bellmen of Elfin Town
Ring out their delicate chime.
The world has not turned upside down,
It is only — Bluebell Time.

[Pinkie, seated on the grass, begins to tie the bluebells into wreaths. Tommy lounges in aimlessly from the terrace.]

TOMMY. Hullo!

PINKIE (*without looking up*). Hullo!

TOMMY (*coming to her*). What are you doing?

PINKIE. Making our May wreaths. The May Children are out in the village; I heard them singing at the Blue Pig and at Mrs. Dobson's. They'll be round here soon. Just look at the bluebells.

TOMMY. I say! They *have* come out!

PINKIE. Yes; I think they must have come out at the Fairy Party. Tommy! What a party!

TOMMY. Not half bad. The supper was awfully well done.

PINKIE. I say, Tommy; do you think they'll forget?

TOMMY. Who?

PINKIE. The Fairy Tale People. Don't you remember Beauty said: "Now we know you we shall pop in from time to time"?

TOMMY. But fancy Aunt Caroline when they pop!

PINKIE. I expect they would make that all right. Beauty spoke as if it were quite the usual thing. (*Throwing wreath to him*) Try that on, will you?

TOMMY (*complying*). It's all right.

PINKIE (*throwing him some bluebells*). Here — you might make Molly's.

TOMMY (*tying up the flowers*). I don't believe she'll wear one; she's awfully Grown-up to-day. She told me she'd had "such a funny dream," and when I tried to whisper to her, she squeaked: "O, O, mind my hair."

PINKIE. Ah, that's what she wanted the slate-pencil for, then. I couldn't imagine.

TOMMY. What *did* she want it for?

PINKIE. For something that boys don't know anything about.

TOMMY. But I do! I've been curled myself.

PINKIE (*with superiority*). Ah, but you haven't been on — on-dulayed.

TOMMY. No, but I bet I jolly well *could* be if I wanted.

PINKIE (*roused*). Bet you couldn't.

TOMMY. All right. Make your own wreath then.

[*Throws down wreath.*]

PINKIE (*rising with dignity*). I am making my own — and I've made yours — and I wish I hadn't. There! (*Throws down wreaths. A pause. Distant singing is heard, "Please to remember the Garland"*) S — st! Listen!

TOMMY. It's the May Children — coming along our road. Come on!

PINKIE (*looking at the flowers*). O, we've forgotten the —

TOMMY. Never mind. Come on!

[*Exeunt by garden gate.*]

[*A plaintive stream of music rises as Aunt Imogen and Uncle Gregory, each with a newspaper, emerge from the house and walk down from the terrace. They walk slowly and dejectedly and finally seat themselves in garden chairs.*]

IMOGEN. Heigh ho!

GREGORY. Er — depressed, Imogen?

IMOGEN. Not exactly depressed, Gregory. There is something in the sweet spring air which revives old dreams — old ambitions. Look at this. (*Pointing to paper*) Pale cream-coloured mousseline de soie with delicate lace insertion throughout and just one touch of —

GREGORY. I know what you mean. I — hum ha — I feel it myself. See this prospectus of the Pterodactyl Ruby Mines — just a few shares not taken up. Ah!

IMOGEN. Ah!

DUET

IMOGEN.

Ah, heart, that kindles at Spring's caress,
Lie still, poor heart, it is not for thee,
That lofty vision of dainty dress,
Of muslin, of net and of organdie.

GREGORY.

Ah, heart, that leaps in the mild May air,
Refrain, poor heart, they are not for you:
The Bogus Mine and the Risky Share
For limited incomes will not do.

IMOGEN. Ah, golden dreamer!

GREGORY. Ah, dainty schemer!

BOTH. Leave, leave thy dreaming ere worse ensue!

IMOGEN.

So here sit I in a plain cloth skirt,
In a blouse from Barker at six and nine.

GREGORY.

And here I linger, supine, inert,
While Consols shrink and Home Rails decline.

IMOGEN.

The picture-hat on the well-dressed hair,
The smart bolero — ah, where are these?

GREGORY.

The manly tussle of bull with bear,
The heartsome chink of Directors' fees!

IMOGEN.

Ah, brain gigantic!

GREGORY.

Ah, soul romantic!

BOTH.

Fold, fold thy pinions: so Fate decrees.

IMOGEN.

So it's hey nonny nonny for the trim cloth frock
 At a sale for a simple song.
 Then if one only chooses
 One or two nice, dressy blouses
 One is set up for the whole year long.

GREGORY.

And it's hey nonny nonny for the gilt-edged Stock
 That is quoted as "firm" and "strong."
 They bring in about a penny,
 So they don't appeal to many,
 But we feel that they can *not* go wrong.

BOTH.

So it's hey nonny nonny for the plain cloth frock [*etc.*].
 So it's hey nonny nonny for the gilt-edge Stock [*etc.*].

[*A chord from the Orchestra. Enter Aunt Caroline on the terrace, her hands full of tradesmen's books.*

CAROLINE (*through music*).

Peace! While I check the books of Josephine,
 The hidden mysteries of the Cuisine.

[*She comes down in meditation.*

RECITATIVE AND ARIA

CAROLINE.

What Power is mine! By culinary grace
 I waft the enraptured soul to realms of bliss,
 Or with a blow from Indigestion's mace
 I hurl it to the nethermost abyss.

Before no rival sway my flag is furled;
The hand that cooks the dinner rules the world!
Supreme I reign, despotic and alone!

(Softly)

Ah, me, but I am lonely on my throne!
Cold is the joint so warm of yore,
Hashed is the mutton of yesterday.

Ah me! Ah me!

And the elderly egg that has gone astray
Is never the egg it was before.

Ah me! Ah me!

For breakfast and lunch and tea!
It's hey for the dinner that's cleared away.
Then ho for the dinner to be!

Stale, so stale is the grocer's cake,
Mouldy the biscuit of yester-year.

Ah me! Ah me!

And flat, so flat, is the table beer
That was drawn last night by a slight mistake.

Ah me! Ah me!

For breakfast and lunch and tea!
It's hey for the dinner that's cleared away,
Then ho for the dinner to be!

[At close of aria Caroline sits in dejection by Imogen and Gregory. Enter Elves — Pickle, Whisper and Twinkle, very softly. They examine the Grown-ups critically.

WHISPER. How dreadfully dull they look, poor things!

TWINKLE. And on May Morning too!

PICKLE. Let us try to cheer them up a bit.

WHISPER. Yes, do let's. We will each take one.

TWINKLE. How shall we do it?

PICKLE. We will just whisper a little to them. You know.

[Whisper stands behind Imogen, Twinkle by Caroline, and Pickle by Gregory. They whisper softly into their ears.

IMOGEN (suddenly). Caroline! Gregory! Do you not feel,

amidst the unfolding of buds, the upspringing of larks, the homage of all Nature to the Spring, that we alone are unmoved? Shall not our hearts go a-Maying with the birds and blossoms?

GREGORY (*looking round*). I do not notice any larks — hum, ha — upspringing, Imogen.

IMOGEN. No, but I'm sure they are upspringing somewhere. Come, Caroline, let us too go a-Maying!

CAROLINE. I own I am conscious of a certain exhilaration, Imogen. Do you then seriously propose that we should — er — May?

GREGORY. How does one — hum, ha — May?

IMOGEN. I am not sure, Gregory, but I imagine that it cannot be difficult. I never heard of anyone who wanted to May and couldn't May.

PICKLE (*to Whisper*). They are getting on. They are really getting on a little, aren't they?

IMOGEN. First of all, I believe, we gather sweet armfuls of May Blossom.

CAROLINE. Hawthorn never comes out until we are nearly in June, as you very well know, Imogen.

IMOGEN. O, well — sweet armfuls of — something or other.

CAROLINE. Understand that I will not have the fruit blossom touched.

IMOGEN (*with growing elation*). Then we crown ourselves with flowery chaplets.

[*With much difficulty Pickle leads Gregory up to the children's discarded wreaths.*]

GREGORY. Do you suppose that — hum, ha — *these* would do?

IMOGEN (*pouncing upon the flowers*). Charming! Charming!

Now, Caroline dear, don't you think we really *ought* to May — just a little?

CAROLINE (*gradually unbending*). Well — perhaps for this once — I really — where's Ann?

IMOGEN. Looking out the washing.

CAROLINE (*awkwardly putting on garland*). Well, then — is that right?

GREGORY. Eh? Bless my soul — ha, hum!

[Puts on wreath.]

IMOGEN (*crowning herself*). Ah! Now! Does not this make you feel at one with Nature, with the merry Springtide? Mercy, how the thing tickles!

[Rubbing her ear.]

CAROLINE. And what do we do next, Imogen, if I may ask?

IMOGEN (*prompted by Whisper*). Next we — we dance on the green.

GREGORY (*trying to enter into the spirit of the thing*). Ha! We dance on the green!

[He hums a polka of the early 'sixties and, with Imogen, prances shamefacedly round once or twice.]

WHISPER. They are really not bad, are they?

TWINKLE. Not at all bad.

PICKLE. And how nice it is to see them looking so natural and sensible, isn't it?

CAROLINE (*suddenly*). Imogen! You are making yourself ridiculous!

GREGORY (*roused*). Well, I must say, Caroline, if you are going to May — *May!*

CAROLINE (*her wreath well over one eye*). I trust that I have too much self-respect willingly to appear absurd, Gregory!

GREGORY. Well, all I say is — if you're going to May —

CAROLINE (*hastily*). What next, Imogen?

IMOGEN (*prompted*). Next — we carol. Ahem!

CAROLINE. Ahem!

GREGORY. Ha, hum!

[They range themselves in a row like a village choir.]

TRIO

'Tis Spring

CAROLINE.

When Frost and Snow have done their worst,
When last year's gnats awake and sting,
When all the outside pipes have burst —
'Tis Spring! 'Tis Spring!

IMOGEN.

When Curates twitter on the lawn
 (Hark how the throaty warblers sing!)
 We know the year is at the dawn —
 'Tis Spring! 'Tis Spring!

GREGORY.

No doubt the fact for comment calls,
 (And gets it, as a usual thing)
 Yet May invariably falls
 In Spring! In Spring!

[As the Grown-ups are concluding with old-fashioned roudades, they are interrupted by shrill voices of Children from beyond the hedge singing the old begging song of the Garland. The Fairies disappear.]

The First of May is Garland Day,
 So please to remember the Garland.
 We come here but once a year,
 So please to remember the Garland.
 So rest you merry, gentlemen,
 We wish you a happy day —

[Enter Molly on the terrace.]

MOLLY. Aunt Caroline — a crowd of children at the gate — shall I let them in?

IMOGEN. One of our quaint old country customs, dear; the children with their May Garlands. Let them in by all means.

CAROLINE. Molly — tell them to keep off the grass!

[Molly opens the gate.]

GREGORY *(to nobody in particular)*. A curious survival of the ancient — ha, hum — rites of Flora, the — hum, ha — goddess of —

[Headed by Pinkie and Tommy, a troop of Village Children rush laughing and shouting into the garden. The Aunts quickly remove their wreaths. Gregory's remains forgotten upon his brow. The Children are brightly dressed in little cloaks and hoods, and all are garlanded with flowers, and bear flowery globes upon long staves. After much hustling, giggling and

tuneless shouting of the Garland Song, they range themselves into two groups, one of boys, the other of girls, and begin to sing.

MAY SONG

BOYS.

Where fare the maids at break of day?

GIRLS.

Far away!

Where lay the lads when dawn was red?

BOYS.

Still in bed.

Why wander under weeping skies

While day is new?

GIRLS.

On field and wood the sweet spell lies,

May's magic dew.

CHORUS.

May is a pretty maid,

Pretty maid, pretty maid.

She plies a merry trade.

Merry maid, stay.

Give of your honeydew,

'Twill every charm renew.

We shall be pretty too,

Pretty and gay;

Sweet as merry maid May.

[The Children go through a quaint Morris Dance with staves and garlands, then, to a merry old-world air, fall into a contre dance (up the middle and down again). All join. The Grown-ups with ponderous condescension trot gravely down the middle, then retire up stage. Pinkie, Tommy and Molly next dance down, then — after a slight pause — a Young Lady in a very smart visiting gown appears between the rows of Dancers and skips down the middle with an almost unnecessary display of little shining shoes. Down stage at the end of the row, she meets Molly.]

LADY. *There* you are, my dear! (*Kisses her*) How are you? Does nobody ever answer the bell at your front gate? I've been ringing for the last five minutes.

MOLLY. I'm so sorry — the children have been making such a noise. I'm sure my Aunts will be ——

THE LADY (*rather gravely*). So you have quite forgotten me. I thought perhaps you might.

MOLLY. —— So stupid of me! Of course I know your face, but ——

[*Pinkie and Tommy approach.*]

THE LADY (*expectantly*). Well, children?

PINKIE (*after a long stare*). Cinderella de-a-r!

TOMMY. Princess Cinderella!

CINDERELLA (*with mock hauteur*). Not at all. Lady Pantouffle Vere. Don't forget. We're not under the moon now, you know.

MOLLY (*to Tommy*). What name did she say, Tommy? I can't remember where I have seen her!

TOMMY. Molly! Don't you know her?

[*The May Children swarm round Cinderella, holding out hands and singing, "Please to remember the Garland."*]

CINDERELLA. Jolly little kids! Here —— (*Drawing a handful of silver from bag at her side*) Catch! (*Scatters it. The Children scramble*) And now I think you had better run along. Nothing more to be got here, I fancy.

SOME CHILDREN. Three cheers for the Pretty Lady!

CHORUS. Hip, hip, hurrah!

[*The Children crowd out at the gate, their voices dying away down the lane as the scene proceeds.*]

PINKIE (*panic-stricken, to Cinderella*). O, here comes Aunt Caroline! What shall we do?

[*The Aunts come down, evidently prepared for battle. Gregory accompanies them. Cinderella attacks at once with vigour.*]

CINDERELLA. How do you do, dear Miss — er — Mr. — er? I know I am taking an unpardonable liberty in calling, but the fact is that one of those odious motors all but ran us down just at your gate, and Johnson, my coachman, says that the horses are suffering from nervous shock — or something —

and he's giving them salvolatile, or burning feathers under their noses — or whatever you do in such cases — and so I — O dear. I never sent in my card! — Lady Pantouffle Vere — and as this young lady and gentleman and I are old friends —

[Giving a hand to Pinkie and Tommy.

CAROLINE. Elenour! I had no idea that you knew Lady Pantouffle!

PINKIE AND TOMMY. I — I — we —

CINDERELLA. — Met at a party, didn't we? Dear me, it seems only last night. What fun it was! O, by the bye, children, Rosabel Dormer is with me in the carriage. Won't you bring her in? She'd love to see the garden.

TOMMY. Princess Rosabel?

CINDERELLA. Hush — we drop the Princess here. (*Exit Tommy by gate. To Aunts*) Don't you know Rosabel Dormer? One of the du Bois Dormers, you know.

THE AUNTS. Ah yes — of course — the du Bois Dormers.

CINDERELLA. You won't mind showing her your charming garden? She has a wonderful rose hedge at her place. Quite a sight. (*Enter through the gate Tommy escorting the Sleeping Beauty. She is very tastefully gowned in grey and purple net, with a large hat trimmed with grey and white poppies. She carries a poppy-covered parasol*) Ah, Rosabel, dear. (*Introducing*) Lady Rosabel Dormer. (*Caroline and Imogen murmur*) I was afraid you would be getting tired of waiting for me, but Miss — er — is being so kind —

SLEEPING BEAUTY. Yes, dear, I was just dozing off.

CINDERELLA. Good gracious, my dear, you mustn't do that! You know how difficult it is to rouse you with none of the usual — er — appliances.

SLEEPING BEAUTY. I will be very careful, Ella dear. Ah, what a deliciously comfortable looking chair! (*To Gregory*) May I? (*He bows and draws chair out*) Thank you so much. (*She sinks into chair. Gregory sits beside her. She regards him with a slow smile*) How very charming and original your — er — floral decorations are, Mr. — er —

[*Gregory looks uneasily round, then, noticing the direction of her gaze, puts his hand to his head and discovers his bluebell wreath, which he tears off in confusion.*]

GREGORY. I — er — ha, hum — bless my soul — ha! Phew!

SLEEPING BEAUTY. But what a pity to take it off! I was thinking how well you looked in it.

CINDERELLA (*to Caroline*). What a brilliant conversationalist your brother must be. I have never seen dear Rosabel so animated.

[*The gate bell rings. All turn their heads. Enter a Telegraph Boy. Molly starts forward with a stifled squeak of alarm. The Boy advances toward her.*]

BOY. Telegram for Miss —

CINDERELLA (*quietly intercepting telegram*). For me. Thank you. (*Opens it slowly, her eye upon Molly. Then speaks softly to her*) Don't jump about like that. Keep quiet. (*Aloud*) Ah, yes, it's all right.

BOY. But please, mum —

CINDERELLA. It's all right. There (*gives money*). Now, run away, child. (*Exit Boy. Reading*) M — m — m — please excuse me. I'm such a busy woman. Telegrams all day long. (*As she elaborately folds up paper she speaks to Molly in a low, even voice*) Listen, Molly. "At the corner — twelve-thirty — George." Did you hear?

MOLLY (*in soft tones of rapture*). At the corner — twelve-thirty — George!

CINDERELLA (*passing the folded paper to Molly*). That's it.

CAROLINE. But how strange that the telegram should have found you here at Whitelands, Lady Vere!

CINDERELLA. Whitelands! Is the name of this place Whitelands?

IMOGEN. Yes, Whitelands.

CINDERELLA. Now, isn't that curious? We passed a motor in difficulties about a quarter of an hour ago, and the young gentleman lying underneath asked if he was right for White — oh!

[*Molly knocks over a chair with a crash.*]

CAROLINE. Really, Molly child!

MOLLY. So sorry, Aunt Caroline.

CINDERELLA (*softly to Molly*). Was I putting my foot in it?

MOLLY. You were — a little.

CINDERELLA (*continuing*). He asked if he were right for White Gates. Now I think it's so funny that he should ask for White Gates and that this should be White Lands. Isn't it? He, he, he! (*Softly*) Laugh, children — for goodness' sake, laugh!

THE CHILDREN (*mechanically*). Ha, ha, ha!

MOLLY (*slightly hysterical*). Ha, ha, ha!

[*Goes into peal after peal of laughter.*]

CAROLINE. Molly!

IMOGEN. You had better go and drink a little water, child, hadn't you?

MOLLY. Yes, Aunt Imogen. I — ha — ha! — I'm going.

[*Exit quickly in much confusion.*]

TOMMY. Whatever's the matter with Molly, Pinkie?

PINKIE. I don't know. I saw Cook like that once. *She said it was the kitchen fire.*

TOMMY. I expect it's just Grown-upness. I told you she was worse this morning. And she didn't remember Princess Cinderella one bit.

PINKIE. Well, it *is* different, seeing her like this. (*Capturing Cinderella*) Cinderella dear, I don't think this is a very nice party. You're not talking to us at all.

CINDERELLA. My dear, I had to make my way. Now I'm free of the house, and we'll do better next time. I'll bring Peerless instead of Rosabel, who certainly is a little heavy, but she was so anxious to come, poor thing. Where *is* she, by the bye? Come along, Rosabel, we must be going. (*The Sleeping Beauty and Uncle Gregory are discovered both blandly asleep in their garden chairs. Gregory wakes with a start at Cinderella's approach; his companion still slumbers*) O, you *don't* mean to say you have let her go to sleep? O, *how* unfortunate! Now she will never wake unless — (*Looks at Gregory and goes into irrepressible peals of laughter*) I beg

your pardon! So rude of me — no laughing matter — Certainly not. (*Looks at Gregory again and collapses*) O dear! O dear! Rosabel dear, do rouse yourself. No, it's not a bit of use! She will never wake unless —

THE AUNTS. Yes — yes? Anything we can do?

CINDERELLA (*with a squeak of laughter*). Unless — a gentleman kisses her!

CAROLINE. Dear me! How extremely awkward!

CINDERELLA. Yes, isn't it? And the habit seems incurable. She has seen any amount of men about it.

CAROLINE. I should have thought that the fewer men she saw about it the better.

CINDERELLA. Your brother has such a kind expression. I am sure he wouldn't mind —

GREGORY. Eh? Why — bless my soul — er — ha hum!

CINDERELLA. Of course, if it is any trouble I'll call the coachman. (*Calls*) Johnson!

GREGORY. No, no! Certainly not — 'm sure — 'f I can be of any use —

CAROLINE. Gregory!

IMOGEN (*softly*). Well, Caroline, we cannot have the woman left planted there in our garden chair.

CINDERELLA. You're *sure* you don't mind? How kind of you!

GREGORY. Not at all — not at all. Er — shall I — ha hum — begin?

CINDERELLA. If you please.

[*Gregory kisses the Sleeping Beauty, who slowly opens her eyes.*]

SLEEPING BEAUTY. Where am I? Ah yes, I remember.

(*Looking at Gregory*) Ella dear, did *this* gentleman? —

CINDERELLA. Yes.

SLEEPING BEAUTY (*quite frankly to Gregory*). Thank you so much.

[*Shakes hands with him.*]

CAROLINE. Well! I'm sure!

GREGORY. Not at all. Not at all. Don't mention it — a most agreeable woman, that!

CINDERELLA. Now, Rosabel dear, we *must* be going. I'm sure

we're dreadfully late already. (*To Gregory*) Could you tell me the correct time?

GREGORY. Close upon twelve.

CINDERELLA. Good gracious! (*Seizing Sleeping Beauty*) Come along, darling! Good-bye, Miss — er, Mr. — er — so pleased to have — so sorry I can't — er — (*Softly to Pinkie and Tommy*) Don't tell, children; it has been such fun. Come out and look at Johnson. Good-bye, good-bye. [*All accompany her to the gate except Gregory. The Sleeping Beauty turns back.*]

SLEEPING BEAUTY. But I haven't said good-bye to ——

CINDERELLA. Come along — come along.

[*Disappears through the gate, followed by the others. The Sleeping Beauty comes slowly back to Gregory. Plaintive music.*]

DUET

SLEEPING BEAUTY.

Ah, sweet is the kiss of the dawn
To the daisies that dream on the lawn.

GREGORY.

On the lawn. Exactly so.

SLEEPING BEAUTY.

And sweet is the kiss of the breeze
As it whispers of love to the trees.

GREGORY.

Yes, I like a nice, freshening blow.

SLEEPING BEAUTY.

But a sweetness far keener than this
There lies in the tremulous bliss
Of a lover's awakening kiss.

GREGORY (*thoughtfully*).

Well, there possibly *might*, you know.

On giving the point my attention,
I find I am able to state

That the samples of sweetness you mention
Are duly proportionate.

SLEEPING BEAUTY.

Ah, hearts that have met but to part,
How, how may they soften the smart?

GREGORY.

I could not exactly say.

SLEEPING BEAUTY.

Could your heart ever learn to forget
This day, when our twain hearts met?

GREGORY (*referring to paper*).

On Wednesday, First of May.

SLEEPING BEAUTY.

For the kiss that has sealed you as mine
I wear on my brow for a sign.

GREGORY.

If you really can't manage to dine
Won't you look in again some day?
If you don't prefer Misses to Misters,
Whenever our way you may be,
Don't trouble to ask for my sisters,
But merely enquire for me.

[*Gregory repeats refrain, Sleeping Beauty joining.*]

SLEEPING BEAUTY.

As I don't prefer Misses to Misters
(There are not many ladies who do),
I will merely leave cards for your sisters,
And only enquire for you.

[*The two gaze solemnly in silence at each other. Reënter Cinderella hastily, followed by the Children.*]

CINDERELLA. Good gracious, Rosabel, are you never — O, I beg your pardon!

SLEEPING BEAUTY (*with great suavity*). I am quite ready, Ella dear.

CINDERELLA. Then do come along.

[*Runs out, dragging the Sleeping Beauty, the Children running with her to the gate.*]

THE CHILDREN. Good-bye. Good-bye.

CINDERELLA (*without*). Good-bye. I *have* enjoyed myself.
Drive on, Johnson. Good-bye.

[*Reënter Caroline and Imogen, who walk down. Gregory is now reading a book.*]

CAROLINE. Well, I never knew such a morning! I am in a perfect whirl. And really, Gregory, I do think you might exert yourself a little more when we have company.

GREGORY. Er — bless my soul, Caroline, one must — ha, hum — reserve a few hours for — hum, ha — study.

CAROLINE. Study! (*Looking over his shoulder*) One of Eleonour's French Readers — *La Belle au Bois Dormante*.

TOMMY. What's that?

PINKIE. *The Sleeping Beauty in the Wood.*

GREGORY (*in some confusion*). Just — hum, ha — brushing up my French a bit, y'know.

CAROLINE (*out of patience*). Really, Gregory! But it's a most extraordinary morning! I've never so much as looked at Josephine's books!

IMOGEN. And Anne must almost have finished the linen by now!

[*The Aunts go hastily into the house. As they retire, fairy music sounds softly, and Pickle, Whisper and Twinkle dance out of the wood singing their refrain of Act I.*]

Through the world the fairies go

To and fro.

Lightly o'er the dappled grass

Trip and pass.

PINKIE. O Pickle — Whisper — we *have* had such a morning! Sleeping Beauty called, and Cinderella, and Molly had a sort of fit like Cook, and —

PICKLE. And now something else is going to happen, and we have all come to see the fun.

TOMMY. Is it going to happen now?

TWINKLE. Yes — almost directly.

PICKLE. Well, Pinkie, we all rather liked your elderly friend

last night, but I may as well tell you at once that she won't do.

PINKIE. Won't do? Molly?

PICKLE. O, not at all. She will come back to us some day — quite soon, I fancy — but just now she must go.

WHISPER. What's more, she's going.

TOMMY. I don't think she *is*. Aunt Caroline said ——

[*Molly appears on terrace in a most becoming hat and motor c'ok.*]

MOLLY. S-s-s-t! S-s-s-t! (*All turn*) Where are they?

PINKIE. Who?

MOLLY. Aunts.

THE CHILDREN (*pointing violently*). In there — in doors — in the house!

MOLLY. Will you swear?

THE CHILDREN. Honest Injun.

[*Molly retires for a minute, during which a bumping sound is heard. All listen breathlessly. Molly reappears.*]

MOLLY. O, I believe I've strained my wrist!

PICKLE (*politely*). Good morning! It's hardly worth while to pretend not to see us now that you're just off.

MOLLY. O — er — it's Fairy Pickle again, I suppose. You are so confusing to me somehow.

PICKLE (*presenting a paper*). This belongs to you, I think.

MOLLY (*with a jump*). O! My telegram! (*Re-reading*) "At the corner, George." How dreadful of me! I'm always dropping things.

PICKLE. Then I think, if you intend to drop that telegram any more, you might improve upon it.

MOLLY. Improve?

PICKLE. Well, don't you think it would read better if you altered "At the corner" to "At the station"? It's in the opposite direction.

MOLLY (*in awe*). Pickle! What perfectly splendid ideas you have! Tommy, where's your india-rubber?

PINKIE. But Molly — would *he* like it? You know you said he would not have you stoop to deceit.

MOLLY (*hurt, but gentle*). Pinkie dear, you are only a little girl and cannot be expected to understand such things. But this is *my* telegram, and no one else has any right to read it — so I am perfectly justified in assuming that whatever I write in it will remain strictly private.

PINKIE. I see.

MOLLY (*to Pickle*). And then I drop it — there!

[*Places it carefully on the path with pebble upon it.*]

TOMMY (*shocked*). But — I *say*, Molly! Isn't that —

MOLLY (*even more gently*). Tommy dear, confirmed habits are not to be corrected in a day. I always *have* dropped things.

TOMMY. I see.

MOLLY (*restless*). It must be more than half past twelve.

Tommy! Look down the road, will you? Do you see anything?

TOMMY. No. Only a motor car waiting at the corner.

MOLLY. Tommy — is there — is there anybody in the car?

TOMMY. There's a gentleman.

MOLLY. A young gentleman?

TOMMY. No. An old gentleman.

MOLLY. An *old* gentleman?

TOMMY. Yes, quite old. (*Molly depressed*) Quite as old as you are — older.

MOLLY (*much relieved*). Tommy — are you pretty strong?

TOMMY. Feel my muscle.

MOLLY. Well — will you give me a hand with something — and — do you mind not clumping your boots?

[*Molly and Tommy disappear into the house.*]

PINKIE. Molly — is it a s'prise?

MOLLY (*reappearing*). Ye-es. I think perhaps it is.

[*She and Tommy together carry a box out of the house. Green-robed Fairies begin to creep from the trees and bushes, their eyes fixed upon the departing Molly. Dimly, in the wood, appear the figures of the Fairy Tale Heroines, again in their dress of Once upon a Time.*]

CINDERELLA. Well, good luck, Molly. I've come to see you off, though you don't believe in me one bit.

BEAUTY. And so have I, though I'm sure you don't remember me.

SLEEPING BEAUTY. And I, though you wouldn't so much as look at me this morning.

PICKLE. And all of us, though she always pretends not to see us.

MOLLY (*dropping her end of the box with a bump*). O, I'm so sorry, dear Fairy Folk. Of course I see you — I see you as well as ever. But I'm afraid that if people — if — if George knew, he would think I was not grown up.

CINDERELLA. My dear, George likes to consider you a child. It enables George to overlook the fact that he ought to be in short petticoats himself.

BEAUTY. Besides, we have seen a good deal of George lately. He has dropped in very frequently.

MOLLY. Well, I must say I think he might have mentioned it!

SLEEPING BEAUTY. Don't be alarmed, dear. I am not in the least his style.

CINDERELLA. Besides, we are all married women, so he couldn't possibly care about us.

MOLLY. No. No, I forgot that. Of course he couldn't.

PICKLE. And now you must go, dear. See, we have all come to say good-bye.

[A ripple of white, waving hands runs over the green-clad fairy crowd.]

MOLLY. But shall we never meet again? O, Pickle, shall I never be in Fairyland again?

PICKLE (*gravely*). There are more Fairylands than one, but the same King rules over them all.

MOLLY. And his name is ——?

PICKLE (*kissing her*). I think you are going to find out.

[Molly and Tommy raise the box and stagger down the path to the gate. As they go the fairies' Song of Farewell rises.]

SONG

CINDERELLA.

Ah, ye to-day
Whose hearts are young,
Who speak the tongue
Of babe and fay,
Ye have not flung
Your wings away.

BEAUTY.

While, grave and pale
The learned pore
O'er tomes of yore
Till dim eyes fail;
Each gathered lore
But adds a veil.

SLEEPING BEAUTY.

Ah, over-wise
With knowledge vain
Who search in pain
For Paradise,
Through childhood's eyes
Look forth again!

CHORUS.

What lies at hand
Why seek afar
In distant star,
On far-off strand?
Where children are
Is Fairyland.

[Molly and Tommy have disappeared. Pinkie stands watching by the gate. Reënter Tommy alone.]

PINKIE. Tommy — she never said good-bye to me!

TOMMY. Didn't she? She never was really our sort. I tell you what, Pinkie. It's a jolly good thing she's gone. She's a Grown-up.

PINKIE. O, Tommy, no!

TOMMY. She *is*. And now she'll marry, or some rot of that sort, and she'll be an Aunt before she can look round. You see if she isn't.

PINKIE. Of course she'll marry. So shall I. All girls do. But she won't be an Aunt! — O, Tommy, will she? (*Almost in tears*) O Pickle, Molly's gone away to be an Aunt!

PICKLE. Well, Pinkie, Aunthood is a condition that must be faced. It might come to anybody. Besides, there are Aunts and Aunts.

[*Loud voices are heard in the house. The window flies open, and Caroline and Imogen burst into the garden talking violently.*]

IMOGEN. No, Caroline!

CAROLINE (*in gasps*). Not three minutes ago — yes, quite distinctly — from the schoolroom window — yes, Anne.

IMOGEN. But Caroline, Molly —

CAROLINE. Yes, Molly — with her box — Thomas helping — Anne *saw* them, I tell you! (*Both talk at once*) Good heavens! And Elvira said she was such a sweet, bid-dable girl, and would be no trouble, and quite good at plain sewing and parish work, and never wanted early tea in her bedroom, and —

IMOGEN. Good heavens! And Timmins the butcher in the kitchen at this moment, and she's sure to meet the fish-monger and Mrs. Dobson down the road; and now it will be all over the place that *our* niece —

[*Caroline sees and pounces upon the telegram.*]

CAROLINE. Ah, a telegram! A clue! — "At the station, twelve-thirty, George." Imogen, my bonnet! Your hat! (*As Imogen flies into the house*) There is no train till twelve-forty-five! We shall come up with them!

[*Snatches hat from the returning Imogen and rushes for the gate. Imogen claps on bonnet, discovers strings and dashes after Caroline, shouting.*]

IMOGEN. Caroline! Caroline! You've got my hat! — I've got your — Caroline!

[*Her voice dies away down the lane.*]

THE CHILDREN (*amazed*). But — *what's the matter with them?*
What's it all about?

PICKLE. This is what is called the Love Interest, my dears.
Now the story is going to begin.

[The elfin Chorus of Farewell swells up again as the Fairies fade slowly away into the wood.]

CHORUS

Ah, ye to-day
Whose hearts are young,
Who speak the tongue
Of babe and fay,
Ye have not flung
Your wings away.
Those wings have fanned
That space apart
Set on no chart
By mortal hand;
The Young of Heart
Hold Fairyland!.

[During the chorus Uncle Gregory drops his paper and sleeps profoundly. Tommy gazes moodily at him, his hands in his pockets. Pinkie walks thoughtfully towards the house and disappears through the window. As the Fairy Voices die away, her five-finger exercises recommence with great vigour, and the curtain falls.]

THE END

ABOUT PUNCH AND JUDY

Of all the plays I ever saw,
There's none like Punch and Judy;
The utter disregard for law
Is far from goody-goody.

The roguish eyes, the beakèd nose,
The funny cap and goggles,
The way Punch relishes his blows,
The way his wife he joggles, —

It takes me back to days of old
When Punch and Judy, maybe,
Were not so rough, and did not scold,
And also had no baby;

When Punch from Italy first came
To English Will and Mary,
When he had won no British fame,
And was not so contrary;

When Punch's face had no such smile
As later marked the fellow —
When he was not so full of guile,
But more like Pulcinello.

'Twas then, to please the common folk —
With manners none to brag on —
He swapped *his* manners for a joke,
A theater for a wagon.

He traveled through the British Isles,
With squeaky tones most roistrous,
His nose and chin both touched in smiles —
And he became quite boistrous.

But though his manners were not nice,
His jokes somewhat ambitious;
And though 'twas said he favoured Vice,
Because his acts were vicious, —

Of all the plays I ever saw,
There's none like Punch and Judy;
The utter disregard for law
Is far from goody-goody.

'Tis not that I don't care for law —
For law is as it should be —
And what I see and what I saw,
Are not as bad as could be —

'Tis only that the wooden chap —
His wooden wife and baby —
Have lived so long without mishap,
They should live longer — maybe.

And I would hate to feel this book
Was only goody-goody;
To think that children would not look
At ancient Punch and Judy.

PUNCH AND JUDY

*AS PERFORMED IN ALL NURSERIES IN EUROPE, ASIA,
AFRICA, AND AMERICA*

PUNCH AND JUDY

PUNCH (*looking over curtain*). Hullo! there, I've got my eye on you. Here we are again, all a-blowing and a-growing. Wait till I've got my boots on and I'll be with you. (*Sings*)

“*I'm such a good-natured old chap,
I wear a nice hump on my back,
I've a beautiful nose,
And a fine suit of clothes,
And a stick — to fetch you a whack.*” (*Comes on stage*)

How de do? I'm in a good humour this morning; got out of bed the right side. (*Dances round the stage. Sings*) “*See me dance the polka.*” (*Calls below*) Judy! Judy!! Judy, Judy, Judy, come —

JUDY (*pops up*). Now, Mr. Punch, I'm busy, — can't wait a second. There's this and that, and t'other and which, all got to be done first. Now, what do you want?

PUNCH. Oh! nothing, only wanted to know if you'd like a nice — new — beautiful silk dress, but as you are busy it's of no consequence. Any time next year will do.

JUDY (*sidling up a little*). Punchy-wunchy, dear old Punchy, I'm not so very, very busy. Let's go at once.

PUNCH. Well! that will do, if you can't be sooner. But give me a kiss first. [*They hug each other affectionately and then dance a jig.*]

JUDY. Now I will go and dress the baby.

PUNCH. And don't forget to put a clean collar on Toby. [*Toby barks.*]

PUNCH (*calling*). Toby, Toby, old dog — Here! cats, rats, seize 'em! fetch 'em! Whoop!

TOBY. Bow-wow-wow.

PUNCH. Come here! Shake hands, Toby; you're a nice, good-

tempered dog; (*Toby snarls*) with such a cheerful smile.
(*Toby snaps at his nose*) Oh, my nose! my best Sunday
nose, my only nose.

[*Enter Jim Crow.*]

JIM. Yah! Yah! Yah! Golly! Massa Punch, how am you
dis mawnin'?

PUNCH. Yah! Yah! Yah! "woolly head," how are you last
Saturday fortnight? Why don't you wash your face? —
you're as black as a sweep.

JIM. Don't you call names, old lobster-nose!

PUNCH. What? You Jack-in-the-box, would you insult my
beautiful nose? [*Aims a blow at him with his stick.*]

JIM. We are not taking any dis mawnin'. Call again. [*Punch
calls again, but misses him. Jim sings.*]

"Turn about, and wheel about, and do just so,
And every time I turn about, I jump, Jim Crow."

[*Punch continues to strike at him, but misses. Exit Jim Crow.
Enter Punch on a Donkey.*]

PUNCH. Whoa! Neddy, tuppence more and up goes the don-
key. (*Donkey kicks and throws Punch off*) Oh, I'm killed!
I'm dead! Doctor! Doctor! [*Enter Doctor.*]

DOCTOR. Hah! my good friend Punch. How's my friend
Punch? Let me feel your tongue.

PUNCH. Oh! I'm dead!

DOCTOR. No, no! Not so bad as that. Let me look at your
pulse.

PUNCH. Yes! dead as a door-nail. All my bones are broken
and I can't move. [*Kicks the Doctor in the eye.*]

DOCTOR. How long have you been dead?

PUNCH. Three weeks.

DOCTOR. And when did you die?

PUNCH. Oh! half-an-hour ago! I've been knocked down and I
want a "Pick-me-up."

DOCTOR. Oh! I'll give you a tonic, such a good one! (*Fetches
stick*) "Before taken to be well shaken." [*Shakes Punch
and then whacks him.*]

PUNCH. Only one dose at a time, Doctor; it's strong medicine.

DOCTOR. Oh! you're not cured yet. (*Whacks Punch again*)

Physic! Physic! Physic!

PUNCH. Yes, I am, and I'll pay your bill. (*Takes the stick and knocks the Doctor down*) That's the way to pay the Doctor.

(*Calls*) Judy! Judy! Judy! Where's the baby?

JUDY. Here, Punchy, here's the "pretty ickle sing." Now, take care of him while I go round the corner. [*Goes round the corner.*]

PUNCH (*with the Baby, sings*). "Don't make a noise or else you'll wake the baby." It was a popsey-wopsey. Isn't it a beautiful baby? (*Baby squalls*) Stop that noise — you two-penny doll. (*Sings*) "Hush-a-bye, baby, on the tree-top." (*Baby yells*) Go to mammy! [*Throws Baby out of window. Enter Judy.*]

JUDY. Where's the child — where's my dear, dear — darling — Baby?

PUNCH. I thought you caught him. I threw him down to you.

JUDY. Oh! you cross-nosed, hook-backed, bandy-eyed, hump-legged old villain, take that — and that — and — that. [*Beating him with stick.*]

PUNCH (*taking stick from her*). There's a little one for yourself. [*Knocks her down. Enter Crocodile.*]

PUNCH. Hullo! What a mouth for the toothache. (*Rams his staff down the Crocodile's throat*) Oh, dear! he has swallowed the toothpick. (*Sings*) "Ri tooral, looral, li-day." [*Enter Joey.*]

JOEY (*poking his head round the corner and disappearing again*). Tooral, looral, li-day.

PUNCH. Did anybody speak? (*Sings*) "Fol-de-rol, tol-de-rol, fol-de-rol-day."

JOEY. No, the wind blew. Fol-de-rol, tol-de-rol, fol-de-rol-day. Punchy! Punchy! Punchy!

PUNCH (*looking round the corner*). "Who is dat a-calling so sweet?" [*Joey comes up with the dead body of Judy and pokes it in Punch's face.*]

JOEY. Punch!

PUNCH. Why, I settled you long ago. [*Knocks Judy down. Joey comes up with the body of the Doctor and bobs it in Punch's face.*]

JOEY. Punch!

PUNCH. Hullo! Here's the Doctor come for his bill again (*Whacks the body, and suddenly discovers Joey between Judy and the Doctor*) Hullo! (*Tries to hit him, but Joey dodges*) Shake hands, Joey! I wouldn't hurt you for the world. (*Aims a blow at him, but misses*) There, it didn't hurt, did it?

JOEY. No.

PUNCH. Nor that, nor that, nor that? [*Aims at him, but misses.*]

JOEY. Not a bit; didn't feel it.

PUNCH. Try one of this sort. [*Misses again.*]

JOEY. Go on — you couldn't hit a haystack.

PUNCH. Oh, dear! I can't hit him at all. [*Aims another blow at Joey, but hits Jones, who has just popped up. Exit Joey.*]

JONES (*rubbing his head*). What a fortunate fellow I am. If there is anything knocking about I'm sure to come in for it. Now, Mr. Punch, where's my dog Toby?

PUNCH. What sort of dog is he — a little dog with a tail on one end and a head on the other?

JONES. Yes.

PUNCH. Well, that's my dog.

JONES. I tell you he's mine.

PUNCH. Will you fight for him?

JONES. Yes; but let's fight fair. No hitting on the head and no hitting on the body, no treading on the toes.

PUNCH. All right. Come on. [*Hits Jones on the nose.*]

JONES. I say, that's against the rules. (*Calls Toby*) Toby! Toby!! Toby!!! Come and help your master. [*General fight.*]

[*Enter Beadle.*]

BEADLE. Hullo! Hullo!! Hullo!!! What's all this noise about? Move on, I say.

PUNCH. Hullo! Hullo!! Hullo!!! Here's another guy.

BEADLE. Do you know who I am?

PUNCH. Oh! you are Church Warming Pan, Street Sweeper, and Black Beetle of the Parish. So am I.

BEADLE. Pooh! You a Beadle? Show me your authority.

PUNCH. There it is. [*Pokes his staff into him.*]

BEADLE. Don't you knock me about in that manner. [*They fight.*]

BEADLE. There goes one.

PUNCH. Well, and there goes two.

BEADLE. That's another one.

PUNCH. There's a rubber one.

BEADLE. Oh! that's a topper.

PUNCH. And that's a whopper. (*Knocks him out of sight*)
That's the way to serve the Beadle. [*Enter Policeman.*]

PUNCH. Bobby, what's the time? (*Sings*) "*If you want to know the time, ask a policeman.*"

POLICEMAN. I'll tell you the time — it's time for you to go to prison.

PUNCH. Oh! you're too fast, and I'm not going.

POLICEMAN. I've an order in my pocket to lock you up.

PUNCH. And I've an order in my pocket to knock you down.

(*Does so. Enter Beadle and Hangman*) Oh, dear! Oh, dear!
I'm so sorry. [*They arrest him.*]

PUNCH IN PRISON

Enter Hangman

HANGMAN. Now, Mr. Punch, come out and be hanged! I'm in a hurry.

PUNCH. But I'm not. (*Hangman drags him out*) Oh! I've a bone in my leg; I can't walk.

HANGMAN. You won't want to walk any more. Now, have you made your will?

PUNCH. No.

HANGMAN. Well, we can't hang you till you make your will.

PUNCH. Then I won't make mine at all.

HANGMAN. Now, no nonsense, put your head in here. [*Points to noose.*]

PUNCH. Here?

HANGMAN. No, higher up.

PUNCH. Here?

HANGMAN. No, lower down.

PUNCH. Here? Here? Here? [*Putting his head everywhere but in the noose.*]

HANGMAN. No. Stupid! There!!

PUNCH. Well! How am I to know? I never was hanged before.

HANGMAN. That's true. Well! I'll show you; evidently you don't know how it's done. See now, you put your head in like this. [*Puts his head in the noose.*]

PUNCH. Yes; and you pull the rope like this. (*Pulls the rope and hangs the Hangman*) Oh! it's quite easy when you are used to it. That's the way to serve the Hangman. (*Sings*) "*What a day we're having.*" Now! I don't care for anybody or anything.

[*Enter Ghost.*]

GHOST. Boo! ooo!! ooooo!!

PUNCH. Oh, dear! Here's my sweetheart back again. Take it away!

GHOST. Boo-oooo!! Wmm-rrr!! Ooo!!

PUNCH. Why don't you speak English?

GHOST. I can't; I'm a foreigner and come from Bogieland.

PUNCH. Well, I hope you've got a return ticket. What do you want?

GHOST. I've come for Punch — the man who was to be hanged.

PUNCH. Oh! there he is. (*Points to Hangman*) Take him away. I don't want him.

GHOST. Thank you — much obliged. [*Takes Hangman.*]

PUNCH. Good-night. (*Crows*) "*Cock-a-doodle-doo.*" (*Ghost disappears*) That's the way to get rid of the Ghost. Well, they are all gone now. I've settled all my enemies, so I'm going to live in peace and quiet. Good-night, little boys and girls! Good-night, everybody! Good-night! Good-night!

THE END

[There is another very clever arrangement of "Punch and Judy," issued by Samuel French, New York and London. It is prepared by E. T. Richmond. From this, I am given permission to quote the following:

The first requirement of the performance will naturally be the *dramatis personæ*. These, in the drama as usually played, are as follows:

1. Punch. 2. Judy. 3. The Baby. 4. The Dog Toby. 5. The Clown. 6. The Policeman (or Beadle). 7. The Hangman. 8. The Doctor. 9. The Ghost. The head for each character must be carved out of wood, with a tubular cavity in the neck large enough to admit the first joint of the performer's forefinger. Wooden arms and legs must next be prepared. These need only extend to the elbow and knee, and the Baby will require arms only. Appropriate costumes must next be manufactured. Mr. Punch will have the usual conical hat, and Judy a frilled cap with black ribbons. The body of each figure is a mere bag, just large enough to admit, through an opening behind, the hand of the performer, whose forefinger is thrust into the hollow of the neck, and the thumb and second finger into the sleeves, thereby giving motion to the arms.

The robes of the various characters are firmly attached to the respective heads, and the arms glued just within the lower part of the sleeves. By slipping his hand therefore within the robe, his forefinger being inserted into the hole in the neck, and his thumb and middle finger into the sleeves, as above mentioned, the performer not only keeps the robe properly distended, but is able to impart the requisite appearance of vitality to the figures.

Having described the characters, it next becomes necessary to say a few words as to the "stage" whereon they perform. Most of our readers will be familiar with the portable theater of the genuine street artists; a sentry-box-like wooden framework with a green baize cover within which the performer stands, while a movable shelf in front of him supports the box which contains the puppets and other "properties" of the mimic drama. A little simple stage-carpentering will transform the domestic clothes-horse into a capital Punch-and-Judy theater. Some sort of ornamental framework or border should be tacked all round the outer edge of the opening, by way of a kind of proscenium, and a slip of thin board, three or four inches in width, should be nailed horizontally across from side to side, to form the stage. The remainder should be covered with green baize, tammy, or any other available material, reaching to the ground. The structure should be placed against a wall, or window curtain, which will close its vacant side, and form a convenient background.

Where even this simple arrangement is deemed too elaborate, an open door with a slip of wood, tacked across it about six feet from the floor, and a table-cover hanging from this by way of curtain, will serve as a tolerable makeshift.

The "properties" of the drama are not numerous. They consist of a gal-lows, a couple of wooden sticks about a foot in length and half an inch in diameter, and an instrument known as the "squeaker," which is said to be

used to produce those peculiar vocal effects in which Mr. Punch delights. It consists of a couple of pieces of tin, each about an inch and a quarter in length and three-quarters in breadth. These, which are slightly curved in the direction of their length, are laid one against the other (the concave faces inwards), with a piece of tape or China ribbon, of the same breadth, stretched tightly between them, and the whole bound firmly together with thread. This instrument is placed in the mouth, and is asserted to produce the Root-i-too-ti-too! and other eccentricities of the Punch language.

It is customary to have a second or assistant showman, who stands outside the theater and forms the orchestra, for which purpose he is supplied with a set of Pandean pipes and a drum, or, for lack of these, with the best substitutes available. In a drawing-room, some obliging young lady at the piano-forte will generally render the performance independent of his musical aid. His duty is to converse with Mr. Punch, to "draw him out," to elicit his views on things in general, and his own domestic arrangements in particular, and last, but not least, by judicious repetition, in the form of questions or otherwise, to translate, so to speak, his observations to the audience.

ABOUT THE THREE WISHES

I remember once seeing a puppet show — you who have read “Pinnochio” recall what a puppet is — in a little store far down-town in New York’s most crowded section. It was a long, bare room, unventilated — with hard, wooden benches running crosswise from wall to wall. A crowded stage at one end was dimly lighted by gas jets, and the footlights threw strange shadows on the faces and figures of the wooden heroes and heroines, and made ghostlike the strings by which they were worked. The owner of these puppets earned his livelihood in a factory by day, and all his wages went into his theater by night. The benches were but half filled with lovers of the ancient art of puppetry, and Signor — for he was an Italian — was having a struggle to meet expenses.

His small son, Michael Angelo, helped in the show business, but whenever he had spare time he went upstairs — where the family lived — and, on the dining table, covered with a dingy red cloth, the dark-eyed boy drew pictures and dreamed of his ambition to be an artist. I do not remember whether or not he drew and painted scenes of mortal combat, such as filled the stage of the puppet theater below; but I do know that the tale which his father enacted, part after part, night after night, was not more romantic than the dreams of that small boy. I remember that he spoke then of the hope of someone rescuing him from his daily chores, and whisking him away to Italy, where he might draw large frescoes for churches, like the masters of old.

Salvatore Cascio loved his puppets, and he may still love them for all I know. There was a time in the past when every country honoured these inanimate figures, gaily painted and brightly dressed. Even in ancient Egypt, marionettes have been found in the excavations, revealing a life thousands of

years old. Every country has its story to tell of puppet shows and showmen. Mostly they were popular pastimes, with jugglery and dance and marvellous trickery, and they used to travel the country after the manner of Punch and Judy long before they became stationary performances in a roofed theater. An interesting volume by Helen H. Josephs, called "*A Book of Marionettes*", tells the history of these strange wooden creatures.

It is not necessary for you to know the curious interest taken in marionettes by Maurice Maeterlinck, the Belgian dramatist, by Gordon Craig, the son of Ellen Terry. Nor does it matter much here if we do not dwell on the love of puppets shown by George Sand, the French novelist, or Anatole France. Then, too, in England, puppets have been championed by Robert Louis Stevenson, who has written an essay about them, "*A Penny Plain and Two Pence Colored*", by Arthur Symonds, the poet, and Bernard Shaw, the playwright. Nor does it make any essential difference if we do not follow the interest in puppet shows by the Little Theaters of the country, — many of which have attempted the revival of the ancient form very successfully.

What is necessary here is to realize that one of the most distinctive puppet showmen at present is Mr. Tony Sarg, yes, the same Mr. Sarg who illustrated this book. He has an almost uncanny way of making his wooden friends human. He is always experimenting how to improve his puppets, and no one is better versed than he in the vagaries of his dolls. He has collected a large variety of them around him — there is no artist who has a larger assortment of toys.

In selecting a play used by him, I feel that I have the best example of puppet revival. Mrs. Williamson has worked closely with Mr. Sarg, and has, so she says, invented a puppet smile of which she is vastly proud. These pullers of strings are continually adding to their tricks, and when plays are written for marionettes, stage business is put in for the purpose of sharpening ingenuity. To balance grace with grotesqueness is a difficult thing, to deal with transformation scenes such as are

to be found in Thackeray's "The Rose and the Ring", to give reality to snake charming, oriental dancing and jugglery — merely by the expert pulling of strings — is an accomplishment few puppet enthusiasts possess. Hence it is that Mr. Sarg has won a deserved reputation. Nothing thwarts him; he asks his dramatists to introduce strange tricks and fancies into their plays. Mrs. Williamson writes that though her adaptation of "The Three Wishes" is based on Count F. Pocci's version of the legend, which he wrote for the famous Papa Schmidt's Munich puppet theater, she has put in much stage business for the especial delight of Mr. Sarg.¹ In other words he likes complex puppet action. And for that reason he is anxious to give an arrangement of "Don Quixote."

He drifted into the puppet life through his love for toys. And it was while he was an artist in London, with a studio which was no other than the Old Curiosity Shop, made famous by Charles Dickens, that his friend, Dorothy Neville, who had written a history of toys, fired his imagination for puppets. So you may say that this friend started his interest in puppets, just as his grandparents did, who left him their collection of toys. What he did in his studio made London artistic Bohemia hail him as a novel puppet showman. And so, when he came to New York, Mr. Winthrop Ames, the theater manager, engaged him for a season at the Little Theater, where the marionettes made their professional bow. Since which time, Tony Sarg's puppets have grown to be a yearly expectancy in New York City. His repertory has allowed the fairy element to dominate; his puppets have floated in the air, his ani-

¹ Mr. Sarg has written the following directions which may help in understanding the technical tricks introduced into "The Three Wishes."

ACT I. The Fairy is secluded in the tree, with strings and wire running up the tree-trunk, and fastened at the top, out of sight; another string, when pulled, releases a large enough piece of tree-bark to fall down, in order to enable the fairy to leave the tree.

ACT II. Margaret has a tiny loop fixed to her nose; through this a string leads right into a pocket of her apron, where lie concealed the sausages which later appear on her nose.

The sausages, which appear suddenly in the empty plate on the table, are let down during the flashes of lightning; they hang on a string, and they disappear the way they come.

NOTE. The fairy's body consists entirely of soft flowing material, with nothing solid except head and hands. This gives her lovely grace when she floats in mid-air.

mals have moved humourously near to the real thing, his human beings have gone through surprising transformations. Such novelty has attracted not only the young but the old to his entertainments, so that there is truth in his advertisement that his plays are "for children from six to sixty."

Such an eager artist as Mr. Sarg, with the dominant enthusiasm of a boy about him, is always adapting — out of the past — some of the folk art which used to delight the young and old in days gone by. For the moving picture he has just completed a form of animated silhouette, based on ancient Chinese Shadowgraphs, or, as the French called them, after they had been perfected under the enthusiastic hand of Lemercier de Neuville, *Ombres Françaises*. At the famous Parisian restaurant, Chat Noir, these plays — so lovingly described by Anatole France, — attained a delicacy of colour which suggested their future possibilities. And Mr. Sarg has gone back to these sources for his inspiration.

Thus, with his puppets — and his puppet theater which he is devising so that boys and girls may have one to play with — and his shadow pictures — he is doing much for the revival of an ancient art. How I wish he would silhouette Thackeray's poem, "A Tragic Story", commencing

"There lived a sage in days of yore,
And he a handsome pig-tail wore;
But wondered much and sorrowed more
Because it hung behind him."

With all the novel devices which spring to life in his studio, there is no better companion for entertainment than Mr. Sarg. It would be a pleasure to concoct a puppet play with him. But the next best thing is to have him, with his facile brush and pen, to decorate this book.

THE THREE WISHES

A PLAY FOR MARIONETTES IN TWO ACTS

By HAMILTON G. WILLIAMSON

In conjunction with Tony Sarg

Characters

MARTIN, *a Wood-cutter*

MARGARET, *the Wood-cutter's Wife*

CASPAR, *a Friendly Neighbour*

A FAIRY

A RABBIT

A DOG

THE THREE WISHES

ACT I

A wood scene, showing village in background. Discover a Rabbit sitting on tree stump near big oak tree.

RABBIT. *On tree stump, eating, listening, moving ears, etc., etc.; finally jumps off tree stump and goes off stage.*

TWO BUTTERFLIES. *Fly across stage; finally settle on little hill and fly off when bird appears.*

A BIRD. *Circles round trees and is still flying when Martin enters; then they fly off.*

MARTIN. *With axe in hand. He stops a moment, watches the Bird, then goes up to the oak tree. He looks up. Then he lifts axe far enough to spit in hand. He spits. Raises axe for blow. Drops axe and shakes head tiredly. He turns round, and sits on tree stump, and begins to shake his head in despair. His head drops quite low.*

RABBIT. *Appears from behind the tree, plays a bit in front of tree, and is suddenly discovered by Martin.*

MARTIN *(beating the floor with his hand)*. Pss — s — Ps — s-Ps —

RABBIT. *Jumps round and starts flirting with Martin.*

MARTIN. Pss — s — Pss — Ps — s —

RABBIT. *Dodges behind the tree.*

MARTIN. *Rises carefully and steps gently up to tree as if ready to catch Rabbit.*

RABBIT. *As soon as Martin reaches tree, runs behind tree up to his hole.*

MARTIN. *Changes to back stage; suddenly discovers Rabbit and gives chase.*

RABBIT. *Disappears in hole.*

MARTIN *(Kneels down and tries to pull Rabbit out. He reaches*

deeper and deeper, and suddenly pulls out his hand with a cry).
Ah — The beggar bit me! (*He walks back to oak tree and, after spitting in hand, once more he sings and chops*)
Tune, "Ach du lieber Augustin."

“Oh, I got a tree to chop!
Tree to chop! Tree to chop!
Oh! I got a tree to chop,
Tree to chop down!”

“It will heat my oven hot,
Oven hot, oven hot.
It will heat my oven hot,
Bake my bread brown.”

VOICE (*inside the tree*). Martin! (*Martin gazes about, listens, then lifts axe*) Martin!

MARTIN (*peering around*). Margaret! It can't be wife Margaret. Not her voice! Too early for dinner. I dreamed it.
[*He lifts his axe.*]

VOICE. Martin.

MARTIN (*lowering his axe and looking around*). Hey there!
Who's calling?

VOICE. I'm in the tree!

MARTIN (*looking up*). Where? I don't see you. Come down!

VOICE. I'm inside the tree! I can't get out.

MARTIN. Inside the tree? Nonsense!

VOICE. Listen, Martin. I'm a fairy, an unfortunate fairy.

MARTIN. A fairy! Bah! I don't believe that!

VOICE. It's true! I'm Zimmerimbimba. Imprisoned in this tree for a hundred years!

MARTIN (*laughing*). And the moon is made of green cheese!

VOICE. Don't make fun of me, Martin! It's true. Let me out. The tree is hollow. Cut a hole in the bark.

MARTIN. How do I know you're not the two-horned devil himself, waiting to pop out and catch me!

VOICE. I'll stick my hand through this little hole where a branch has fallen out. See?

MARTIN (*looks up and then walks round to look at the little hand*).

They say the devil has claws, and it's a pink little hand. It must be a young lady fairy. (*Walks back*) Well, out you come. [*He spits and then chops.*

VOICE. Don't cut too deep, Martin. You might hurt me. Just one stroke more.

MARTIN. Ay! Ay! (*He gives final blow, bark falls, Fairy appears. Martin drops on his knees*) Wonderful lady! — I never saw a fairy before! — Don't hurt me! Don't harm me!

FAIRY. Harm you! I shall reward you. Oh — how good to see the sun after a hundred years of darkness! Tell me, how do I look? I used to be extremely pretty.

MARTIN. Beautiful! And very young looking for your age.

FAIRY. What a relief! You see, when I was quite a young girl, not a day over eight hundred, an old dwarf, — a sorcerer, — wanted to marry me. He was hideous, so, of course, I refused. He flew into a rage, and shut me in this tree for a hundred years. The time is up, to-day, and you've set me free! Oh, how can I thank you? What would you like as a reward?

MARTIN. I don't know what to ask, Ma'am. My brain is spinning like a squirrel in a cage.

FAIRY. I know what to give you, Martin! Something splendid! Three wonderful wishes! Here is a ring. Whoever wears it may have three wishes come true.

MARTIN (*taking the ring*). Oh, thank you, Miss — Ma'am. Thank you!

FAIRY. But only three! So, be careful what you wish for. It's easy to waste wishes, but if you choose wisely, you're made for life. (*She sails away*) Choose wisely, Martin, wisely — wisely!

MARTIN (*following fairy with his eyes; then suddenly beating his head*). Wake up, Martin! No, no. I am awake! There's the oak. Here's my axe — and here's the ring. It's all true! Oh, you precious ring! Oh, you beautiful fairy! I'm a made man! I wish — careful! No careless wishes! I'll consult wife Margaret, first, and then the schoolmaster, and the

lawyer, before I wish at all. How lucky I am! Jimminy Cricket! I could jump for joy! (*He sings to tune of "Ach du lieber Augustin"*):

Hip — ey! Hip -- o Hip! Hurray!
Hip! Hurrah! Hip! Hurray!

[*And exits — jumping.*]

CURTAIN

ACT II

Interior of Martin's home.

Discover Margaret, dozing. Bird begins to sing. Dog wakens and barks.

MARGARET (*wakens*). Here, you Fritz! Fritz! Leave old Draggle-tail alone. (*She whistles*) Will you stop barking (*she stamps*), and be a good dog? (*Fritz shakes head*) Don't you love your mistress? (*Fritz sits up*) Oh! Oh! (*Fritz flirts on hind legs*) Come here, Fritz! (*Fritz runs about, barking; finally sits opposite Margaret*) You hungry, Fritz? (*Fritz nods*) You want some meat? (*Fritz nods*) Well, you won't get it! There's no meat in this house. (*Fritz puts head down*) Poor master means poor dog. We get potatoes, morning-noon-and-night. Nothing but potatoes! I forget what meat smells like. Dear old Fritz, *come here!* Hep, hep! [*She pats Fritz's head and makes a fuss over dog. Music of "Augustin" is heard. The Dog begins to bark.*]

MARGARET (*listens*). What's that? (*The Bird begins to sing; the Dog barks*) Stop your noise! Stop it. I hear something. It can't be Martin. Not this early! It sounds like Martin. It is Martin.

MARTIN (*appearing at window, still singing "Hip-o-Hurray"*). Halloo — there! Ha, ha, pigs-joul for me — corned beef! Where's the butcher — call the butcher! Ho — ho — ha — ha —

MARGARET. What ails the man, home so early! [*Dog barks, jumping near entrance.*]

MARTIN (*tumbles in and while picking himself up*). When luck comes into a house, it tumbles in at the door, and I've proved it. (*Dog barks once. Martin steps on chair*) Margaret, drop me a curtesy. I'm as grand a man as the Duke, or I will be. (*Dog barks again*) We've done with poverty. (*Dog barks*) We've done with potatoes. (*Dog barks*) Throw them to the neighbours' pigs. I'm drunk with joy! (*Dog barks*) Be quiet — Fritz. (*Martin jumps down and kicks Fritz*) Quiet, I say —

MARGARET (*sobbing*). Drunk!

MARTIN. Hold your whoop, woman, and look here. Look! [*He holds out ring.*]

MARGARET. Oh-h, a ring! Is it gold?

MARTIN. Aye, and more! (*Leaning forward, and whispering*) A beautiful lady gave it to me!

MARGARET. I don't believe it! What lady would be giving you a ring? You, who look like the latter end of an old goat! [*Sits down.*]

MARTIN. Hold your tongue. A fairy gave it to me!

MARGARET (*angered*). A fairy! Really a fairy?

MARTIN. I'll tell you all about it. (*He walks over behind Margaret's chair*) I let her out of a tree.

MARGARET. What!

MARTIN. Look at it again! (*Margaret gazes*) It's enchanted. It's a wishing ring!

MARGARET. Oh-h-h — no!

MARTIN. Three wishes, she says —

MARGARET. Do you believe it, Martin? Do you really believe it? Let's try it now. Let's wish that —

MARTIN (*interrupting*). Hush, woman, — don't pop a wish out like that. — Look, there's something written in the ring.

MARGARET. What does it say?

MARTIN (*reading*).

“Just three wishes small or grand
Come true if I'm on your hand;
When wishing, choose with greatest care,
For wasted wishes bring despair!”

MARGARET. Oh-h, Martin, how shall we ever know what to ask?

MARTIN. I'm going to the schoolmaster and the doctor and the lawyer, and find out what are the three grandest things a man can set his heart on.

MARGARET. Go — do it now!

MARTIN (*starts walking away*). I'll go right away.

MARGARET. Wait — Martin. Somebody might steal the ring! (*Martin turns*) Leave it here — leave it with me.

MARTIN. Women are light-headed creatures. They mean well — but I ——

MARGARET (*interrupting*). Leave that ring with me!

MARTIN (*goes up to Margaret, and gives ring*). Mind you — It's a sacred charge, Margaret. Mind, you don't — (*A knock*) Who would that be now?

MARGARET. Neighbour Caspar, most likely. I promised him a cup o' ale!

MARTIN. Caspar! He's the biggest tattle-tale in the parish! Don't breathe a word o' the ring to him, or we couldn't shut the door for the neighbours' noses in the crack. Come in, Caspar.

CASPAR. Good morning, Mistress Margaret and neighbour Martin. (*He steps forward*) Did you think you'd rest a spell? You're home early!

MARTIN. Yes, Caspar, it struck me that wood-chopping is no trade for a man of my intellect, so I dropped my axe and came home. You'll excuse me now. I've business to attend to.

CASPAR. Business? What might it be?

MARTIN. Important business. Too deep for a plain, simple man like you.

CASPAR. Two heads are better than one.

MARTIN. That's why I'm going to consult the Duke. (*He bows*) Good-day to ya! [*He leaves. Caspar sits on table. Margaret walks over and sits down.*]

CASPAR. Consult the Duke! — Has the man birds in his brain, Margaret?

MARGARET. Maybe he has and maybe he hasn't. Strange things have happened this day — Master Caspar! I'm fit to jump out of my skin with joy!

CASPAR (*laughing*). Then jump back into a handsomer one.

MARGARET. What's that you say?

CASPAR. Margaret, a secret, unshared, burdens the heart. [*He puts his arm round Margaret.*]

MARGARET. It's no use! I won't tell you.

CASPAR. Please, Margaret! I wouldn't tell a soul.

MARGARET. Will you promise, Caspar?

CASPAR. I promise.

MARGARET. It's such good news, I can't keep it.

CASPAR. Out with it!

MARGARET (*holding out her hand*). Caspar, look at this ring. It's a fairy gift — Three Wishes.

CASPAR. Oh, what luck! What fine luck to drink to! (*He looks about and smacks his lips*) Rare luck to drink to!! (*Smacks his lips again*) I'm your friend, Margaret. — Drink to your luck any day. Don't forget that. Your old friend Caspar!

MARGARET. I'll be the finest lady in the village!

CASPAR. And me her best friend!

MARGARET. I'll have a coach.

CASPAR. And me riding in it.

MARGARET. And horses.

CASPAR. And me behind them.

MARGARET. I'll have grand dinners.

CASPAR. I'll come to them. I will that.

MARGARET (*gets up*). Oh, Caspar, I'm that excited. (*She dances to other chair*) I don't know what to wish.

CASPAR. *Gets up from table, walks to dresser, and looks about for mug; upsets some plates.*

MARGARET. What are you looking for? (*Caspar upsets dishes*) Clumsy!

CASPAR (*turns to Margaret, — turns his head about*). Where are the mugs?

MARGARET. Why, don't you know, — upstairs in the cupboard is a full mug waiting for you!

CASPAR. Ah, upstairs. (*Walks up the steps humming song. Looks into cupboard*) I can't see a mug.

MARGARET. Way back, Caspar! It's a full mug.

CASPAR (*puts his hand in and reaches*). My, what a reach! (*Pulls out mug*) Well, here's good luck, and long live the fairy! (*Starts going down the steps, singing. Tune: "Grad aus dem Wirtshaus"*)

"Here's to your good health,
Full is the ale cup.
Poverty turns to wealth,
Joy bubbles up."

(*Goes on humming, till he sits down*) Well, Margo, here's wishing you three fine meals a day and a stomach to welcome them all. [*He drinks.*]

MARGARET. Slowly man, slowly. That ale's worth tasting.

CASPAR (*gulping and coughing and wheezing*). Ah-h — it is that!

MARGARET. You drink too fast. It's *no* compliment.

CASPAR (*hiccoughs*). Ah — hic — he. That came as welcome as a mouse to a cat's party. Makes me feel fine. *Fine*, Margaret! Fi — (*hic*) — ne. Where shall I put the mug?

MARGARET. Put it on the shelf in the next room. [*Exit Caspar.*]

CASPAR (*off stage*). Fine, Margo, fine.

(*Sings melody, "Lauterbach"*)

"Sauerkraut, sausages, butter and bread,
Good ale that goes to your head.
So stamp on your troubles,
Kick care out the door
And dance with your neighbour instead."

(*He is standing in front of Margaret*)

"So pick up your petticoats, come and dance,
Hop lightly and join in the song.
In cheering up others
You cheer up yourself,
And the man who lives gaily lives long."

(*He throws his head back and laughs long*) Ho — ho — ha — ha [— and sits on Margaret's lap.

MARGARET. Get up, Caspar, — how dare you!

CASPAR (*still laughing*). Say, Margo, when you get your three wishes, life will be one song and dance. Come on, Margo, let's dance! [*He gets up and dances, joined later by Margaret. Dance with encore, if necessary. Margaret falls exhausted into chair.*

CASPAR (*Stretches exhausted on table. He yawns, stretches legs and arms, and then sits up*). Do you know, Margaret, what I feel like now?

MARGARET. I suppose you'll be saying another cup of ale!

CASPAR. No, no — let us have some sausages.

MARGARET. It's so long since I've tasted sausages, I'd not know one if it bowed to me.

CASPAR (*getting off table*). Yes — (*Turns round*) Sausages, nice, crisp, crackling, brown sausages.

MARGARET. Sizzling in the pan.

CASPAR. Brown and bursting! Oh — oh!

MARGARET. Oh. I wish we had some sausages — now! [*Flash of lightning, thunder. Margaret and Caspar fall flat on floor in terror. Sausages are on the table.*

CASPAR (*raising his head in terror*). Are you alive?

MARGARET. I don't know, — are you?

CASPAR. What happened? — It was like a flash of lightning!

MARGARET. What would lightning be doing on a fair day?

CASPAR. It left a pleasant smell behind it, though. Sniff now. (*They both sniff*) If I told you what my nose says, you'd laugh. (*She sniffs*) It says, sausages!

MARGARET. It *does* smell like sausages, new fried!

CASPAR. It's stronger *this* side. (*He rises slowly, looks down at sausages*) Look! It's your wish come true!

MARGARET. Where? [*Getting up*

CASPAR. There, as I am alive, a plateful of sausages!

MARGARET (*sobbing*). Oh — oh! Sausages!!

CASPAR. Hush — hush, woman. It's no sorrow. It's a blessing.

MARGARET. It's a wish come true. Martin will beat me. One wish gone out of the ring. Oh — oh — oh!

CASPAR (*smelling sausages*). Nothing is wrong with these sausages. They're good to eat! (*Margaret sobs*) It's true — you might have wished for a cart-load. Martin couldn't have got mad at *that*! Let's sit down and eat the dish clean and not tell him a word about it. He'll think the fairy cheated him. They're deceitful things, those fairies!

MARGARET. Well, I don't want a beating. Sit down, eat quick and we'll stuff —

DOG. *Runs across stage towards entrance door and barks.*

MARGARET. Be quiet, Fritz! — Oh, he hears Martin. (*Martha's voice is heard outside*) He'll be as mad as murder. (*Caspar get up and begins walking off stage*) Stop, Caspar, — I won't take all the blame alone! It was your fault!

CASPAR. I think I left my cap outside. [*Exit Caspar.*]

MARGARET. Come back, you coward! [*Dog enters, barking and jumping. Martin follows. Margaret is sobbing on the table.*]

MARTIN. It's all settled in the wisest way. We're to have — What's that smell? (*Looks at Margaret*) What's the matter with you, Margaret? (*Looks at sausages*) Sausages! Where'd they come from?

MARGARET. It was all Caspar's fault! It was. He sang and danced, and addled my brain! His mouth watered for sausages. Before I knew it I was wishing for them! — woroo — woroo!

MARTIN. You wished for sausages and you had the ring?

MARGARET (*sobbing*). I forgot all about the ring.

MARTIN (*walking over to Margaret*) So you've wasted a fairy wish I'll show you! Take that and that! [*Beats her.*]

MARGARET. Help, Caspar — help, Caspar! [*Caspar appears a moment, but immediately runs away as Martin continues his beating.*]

MARTIN. Take that — I'll teach you to be wasting wishes! —



THE THREE WISHES

Act II.

Martin. — "Cripes, I wish they were growing to the end of
your nose!!!"

Where's the ring? — Give me back that ring! *Margaret hands back ring to Martin*) Only two wishes left in it now. Cripes, I could bite my thumbs off!

CASPAR (*reappearing* . Be quiet, Martin, two wishes are enough for a simple, quiet man like you! Be sensible. Sit down with us and eat the sausages.

MARGARET. Do, Martin, — they taste like a salted rainbow!

MARTIN. What, eat sausages with you! — You, who have wasted a wish between you!! Cripes, I wish they were growing to the end of your nose!!! (*Flash of lightning. Martin falls flat. Margaret falls on table and Caspar over back of chair*) What was that?

CASPAR. Another wish come true! It's a rough way the fairies have.

MARTIN (*getting up*). Another wish! What wish?

CASPAR. That the sausages were grown on Margaret's nose.

MARTIN. What do you mean?

MARGARET. It's true — it's true! They're grown to me as fast as the tail to a cat. Oh-h-h! I'm a ruined woman. Look — look!

MARTIN. They can't be grown to you. Caspar! Pull them off!

CASPAR (*touching them*). Aw! They're hot — they burnt me.

MARGARET. Oh — oh — I am a ruined woman!

CASPAR (*laughing inwardly*). Never mind. It's not every woman who can nibble her own nose for breakfast! [*He laughs*.

MARTIN. Stop laughing. I tell you — stop! Two wishes gone! Two — aw, what good's the third. What good to be rich like the Duke with that beside me for a wife! (*He points to Margaret*) Look at her — look! An elephant with his nose in curl paper. (*Caspar gives suppressed laughter.*) Stop swinging them, I say! I can't bear it! This ring has brought nothing but torment. By magic they came and by magic they must go. I wish the sausages were off Margaret's nose! [*Thunder and lightning. Martin, Margaret and Caspar fall to the floor. The Fairy appears.*

FAIRY. So all three wishes came to naught!
You know I rather thought they would,
For idle longing never brings
To wise or foolish any good.
If fools could have the things they wish,
By wishing what they wanted to,
Imagine what a snarl the world
Would be in, — in a day or two.
And wise folks, when they want a thing,
Don't need the fairies' help a bit;
They just make sure they want it first,
Then go ahead and work for it!

CURTAIN

ABOUT THE TOYMAKER OF NUREMBERG

Some day I hope Mr. Strong will write his recollections of Robert Louis Stevenson, his step-grandfather. As a small boy, he spent some time at Vailima, in the Samoan Islands, and under Stevenson's guidance did some of his lessons. I find, in Stevenson's Letters, constant reference to the boy, passages descriptive of Austin's playmates among the dusky Samoans, who used to make him native musical instruments to play on. I also find, in one letter, Stevenson's reference to English history which he and the boy were reading together, and Stevenson's debating whether or not he should write a history better suited to the lad's understanding. What a pity we have not such a book from the pen of the great writer!

There were no unusual circumstances attendant on the writing of "The Toymaker of Nuremberg." It is just such a play as one with a quaint imagination would conceive, with atmosphere delightfully suggested in Mr. Sarg's colour frontispiece.

All of Mr. Strong's dramas are tinctured with unusual atmosphere — "The Little Father of the Wilderness", "The Drums of Oude", "Rip Van Winkle", and his version of Madame Rostand's "The Good Little Devil." Then he wrote "Bunny" — the story of a second-hand book-dealer, "The Three Wise Fools", and now he has just finished "The Three Candles." I recall one story he told me, about a play of his; it has no connection with "The Toymaker of Nuremberg", but it revealed to me — when he told it — and a spirited raconteur he can be — his own delicate sense of humour, and a quaintness similar to J. M. Barrie, author of "Peter Pan."

Mr. Strong's "Drums of Oude" was given in London as a one-act curtain piece, on the same program with a longer Barrie play; Mr. Barrie had consented to this. So, the next

time Mr. Strong went to London, he thought it was only due that he call on Mr. Barrie at his home, overlooking Kensington Gardens — made more famous than ever as the residence of Peter Pan, Wendy and John. And here is where Mr. Strong's story begins.

"I reached the gate opening onto a path which led directly to Mr. Barrie's front door. Nanna, the big dog, was there to greet me; she preceded me up the gravel walk, and herself gave a lusty ring to the door-bell. Mr. Barrie answered the imperative call. After we had greeted each other, I said,

" 'Mr. Barrie, I have just been sorely disappointed. Coming through Kensington Gardens just now, I met a duck.'

" 'Pray tell me', I asked him, 'where does Mr. Barrie live?'

" 'Mr. Barrie?' questioned my web-footed acquaintance, 'Mr. Barrie? I don't know any such person.'

" 'Don't you know Mr. Barrie?' I exclaimed — 'the author of "Peter Pan"?''

" 'Peter Pan?' replied the stupid duck, 'what is that?'

" 'Peter Pan — you don't know who the boy is that never grew up?'

" 'No', insisted the duck.

" 'And Wendy and John?'

" 'No', snapped the duck."

Then, turning to Mr. Barrie, Mr. Strong demanded: "Tell me, why is there such ignorance in Kensington Gardens, which became Peter Pan's home after he fell out of his peramb?"

Mr. Barrie listened seriously to this tale, but there was a twinkle in his eye — just as there is a twinkle in his writings, mixed up with the sentiment and gentleness. Here were two quaint writers crossing swords, and Barrie was not to be outdone.

"Tell me, Mr. Strong," he said, "did you notice whether the duck you spoke to had a red bill or a yellow one."

"Why, a yellow one, of course", asserted Mr. Strong.

Whereupon Barrie exclaimed jubilantly,

"I've never had anything to do with the ducks that have yellow bills. So, how could they know about me or Peter Pan!"

It is good to meet grown-ups who are as eager as this to enter into the spirit of the moment, and I am printing Mr.

Strong's play just because it takes an incident in the history of toyland — the onslaught of the Teddy Bear upon nursery favour, — and makes it a play delicate in tone and very charming to see on the stage, when it was produced by the American theater manager, Charles Frohman.

As a matter of record, I give the following:

THE TOYMAKER OF NUREMBERG

GARRICK THEATER

NEW YORK

November 25, 1907

CAST

THE SENTRY	Archibald Rosamund
THE STREET CLEANER	William Bechtel
THE BOY	Leo Herbert White
THE BOY'S FRIEND	Edward Morrissey
THE SERGEANT	Carl Ahrendt
THE POET	Frank Sheridan
THE GIRL	Consuelo Bailey
THE LAMPLIGHTER	Grant Mitchell
THE TOYMAKER	W. J. Ferguson
THE MOTHER	Mathilde Cottrelly
THE EMPLOYER	Frank Wunderlee
THE COOK	Rosa Cooke
THE COACHMAN	William Bechtel
THE CLERK	Grant Mitchell
THE STRANGER	Harrison Armstrong
THE DRIVER	Archibald Rosamund
THE CHILDREN	{ Misses Farrington and Hackett and Master Hackett
THE SOLDIERS	{ Messrs. Cuyler, Redstone, Lehvinne, Daly and Bell
THE CITIZENS	Misses Svendsen and Marie

THE TOYMAKER OF NUREMBERG

A PLAY IN THREE ACTS AND TWO SCENES

BY AUSTIN STRONG

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Application for the right to perform "The Toymaker of Nuremberg" must be made to the author, care of the publishers, Little, Brown & Company.

Dedicated to
CYRIL MAUDE

Dramatis Personæ

THE SENTRY.
THE STREET CLEANER.
THE SERGEANT.
THE BOY.
THE GIRL.
THE MOTHER.
THE LAMPLIGHTER.
THE EMPLOYER.
THE STRANGER.
THE BOY'S FRIEND.
THE POET.
THE CHILDREN.
THE SOLDIERS.
THE TOYMAKER.
THE CLERK.
THE COOK.
THE DRIVER.
THE COACHMAN.

Synopsis

SCENE. *Laid in Nuremberg.* TIME. *Present.*

ACT I. *Scene I. Outside the Walled Garden.*

Scene II. The Toymaker's.

ACT II. *Inside the Walled Garden.*

ACT III. *The Toymaker's again.*

THE TOYMAKER OF NUREMBERG

ACT I

SCENE I

Outside the Walled Garden

The curtain rises on the street outside the Walled Garden of Herr Kronfeldt. A sentry-box to right and a soldier standing in it on duty. A street lamp, not lighted, is in front of him.

The time is late afternoon, the close of a summer day, and the stage is suffused with orange and brown lights. The wall is a fretwork of shadows from the light through the leaves above.

Enter a Soldier, and behind him an Officer. The Sentry presents arms as they pass out. To the left are an Officer and Soldier; to the right a Street Cleaner. A Woman with a basket enters and throws leaves into Street Cleaner's wheelbarrow. Then an old German pushes in a wheelbarrow. He carries a broom. He commences to sweep up the dead leaves. Children laugh at Street Cleaner. Some Children and Citizens pass, all calmly, sedately. Enter a Girl with a smaller Boy and Girl. The small Boy stares at the Sentry — is jerked along. The Girl swishes her skirt away from the Street Cleaner. The stage becomes empty for a space, leaving the Street Cleaner and the Sentry. Enter at left the Boy, a healthy-looking youth of seventeen or eighteen, and with him is his friend, Paul. They carry an empty barrel between them. The Boy is feverish with suppressed excitement. His friend looks up at him with true boyish hero-worship.

THE BOY (*aside to Paul, as they halt with the barrel swinging between them*). Is that our sentry, Paul?

PAUL (*peering at the sentry-box, and shading his eyes with his hand*). No — no — take care! I don't know this one!

Wait till the guard is changed. Ours will come then!

THE BOY. I will see her this time — Oh, Paul, my heart beats so fast!

PAUL. Take long breaths!

STREET CLEANER (*picks up barrow*). Eh! What are you boys doing with that barrel?

PAUL. Please — we are — we are ——

STREET CLEANER. Ah! There's mischief here! (*Putting barrow down*) Explain, please!

THE BOY. I am the Toymaker's son, Street Cleaner — and refuse to explain to you or to anyone.

STREET CLEANER. The Toymaker's son! You are *his* son! Umph! Then it is all right. There can be no mischief. How is your good father, child?

THE BOY. Well — I thank you, Street Cleaner.

STREET CLEANER (*hobbling off and muttering*). The Toymaker's son — um — the Toymaker's son! No — there is no mischief here — the Toymaker's son!

[*The lads watch him exit.*]

THE BOY (*struggling with the end of the barrel*). I can't wait, Paul, — I must begin!

PAUL. No, no — this sentry we don't know, — and he might report us! Wait till the guard changes and our friend sentry comes. (*Music and drum*) Ssh — here they are now.

[*Enter a squad of Soldiers. They change guard with military abruptness, leaving another Sentry in the box. Then the squad passes out as it came.*]

NEW SENTRY (*gruffly*). Hullo — you boys here again?

[*The two Boys run up to him eagerly — still carrying the empty barrel between them.*]

PAUL. Oh, Herr Sentry, may we play again to the young lady in there?

[*Points at the wall.*]

SENTRY. Ha! Ha! Did you ever hear of a soldier spoiling sport! Nay, my lads, do what you please — and I'll stand watch for you.

THE BOY (*dropping the barrel and putting out his hand*). Herr Sentry — you have indeed been truly kind to us ——

[*The barrel falls on Paul's toe.*]

PAUL. Ouch!

THE BOY (to Sentry). — and we thank you from our heart.

[Paul goes to left of barrel.

SENTRY (putting out a white gloved hand; gruffly). Spoken like royalty, Comrade! You'd better hurry — the sun's fast going down.

[The Lads run to the rear and put the barrel against the wall. The Boy sits on it and Paul kneels below on the ground, looking up at him. The Boy takes out the pieces of a flute from his divers pockets, and puts them together.

PAUL. I wonder if it will be a rose or a tulip you will get this time, David?

THE BOY. I am playing for the sight of her face. I've only seen her in church! Ah, will she come — Paul!

PAUL. Yes, I tell you — if you keep on playing. You've always stopped playing when the flower's been thrown over — satisfied with that. But now keep on playing *after*, and she'll be sure to come!

THE BOY. You think so?

PAUL. I know it.

THE BOY. Ah!

SENTRY. Good luck, Comrade!

THE BOY (whispering). How my heart beats, Paul.

PAUL. It will pass.

[The Boy sits on the barrel and begins on his flute to play a quaint, sad little love tune. It is played with great beauty and tenderness. He plays some time, when the Sentry thumps the ground with his gun.

SENTRY. Take care, Comrade! Here come the Poet and Sergeant Strumpf!

[Music. The Boy stops, hides his flute, and remains seated on his barrel. Enter then the Sergeant, a veteran with one leg, one arm, one eye. He is covered with medals. With him is his old friend, the Tragedian, in a long cloak and high hat. They walk arm in arm. The Sergeant, hobbling with abruptness — the Poet with languid, affected ease and magnificent manner. The Sentry salutes the Sergeant by presenting arms. They enter quarrelling.

POET. Well, Herr Sergeant — History tells us —

SERGEANT. Damn your history, sir — I was there! (*Saluting — as they pass — and halting when he sees the Boy*) Ah — Boy!
[*The Boy jumps off the barrel and removes his hat respectfully.*]

THE BOY. Herr Sergeant Strumpf! Herr Von Staufenbach!
[*The Poet takes off his hat with pompous magnificence and bows flatly.*]

POET. Boy — we seek thy father — The Master of the Art of Toys. Is he at home?

[*Paul walks behind, to below the Poet, with the Sentry between him and Poet.*]

THE BOY. Yes — Herr Staufenbach — and he is waiting for you — his dear friends.
[*The Poet puts hat on.*]

SERGEANT (*to Poet*). Well spoken! (*To the Boy*) But what do you here, Boy, at this time of day? You should be at home preparing for bed!

[*Paul has sneaked up behind the Tragedian and pulled at his cloak. The latter bends pompously down. Paul whispers in his ear.*]

PAUL (*in a whisper*). He waits his love lady!

POET (*at once with great air of intrigue*). Trust in me, sir. (*Sentry watches and smiles. Then aloud*) Come, Sergeant Strumpf, let us on our peaceful way.

SERGEANT. No, my friend — I would listen to this lad's explanation.

POET. Come — and I will tell you, Sergeant. (*Boy takes the flute from Sergeant. Crossing left, he drags him reluctantly off*) You see — his schoolmaster, Herr Rose, has asked him to study the effects of the setting sun —

SERGEANT. Oh!

POET (*turns to Boy and winks*). In fact, the great mystery of our German twilight. Observation in the youthful brain and eye! That, you must see, Herr Sergeant, is the secret of our modern education.

[*The Sergeant hobbles off. The Poet, turning, winks at Paul. Exeunt both.*]

SENTRY. Whew! That's what I call "Diplomacy."

PAUL. He's our friend. (*To Boy*) Now begin again.

[*Flute. The Boy plays again. The Sentry paces right and left twice, then returns to his box. Paul, sitting on the ground at the foot of the barrel, hugs his knees and looks up at the Boy with the deep admiration of youth. The Boy plays the little love air with real tenderness — his eyes directed above him on the wall. A large red rose on a long stalk is thrown from the other side of the wall, falling in front of the Boy, who stops playing and goes to pick it up.*]

PAUL. No — no! Don't stop! Keep on playing, — she'll come if you do!

THE BOY (*with emotion in his voice*). But the rose, Paul — the rose.

PAUL (*running and picking up the rose*). Not till you've played her here! Hurry — it will be too late!

THE BOY (*putting the flute to his lips with a catch in his breath*). Paul — My heart beats so fast!

PAUL. Then blow! Make haste — or she'll be in the house.

THE BOY (*about to play when he puts the flute down*). Oh no — I couldn't meet her, Paul — I couldn't actually meet her!

PAUL. Blow — Oh, blow!

THE BOY (*in terror*). I will —

[*With a gasp. Flute. The Boy begins, and the air is very jerky, wobbly, and weak, but, as he goes on, he warms to it, and it becomes pure and liquid again. He plays for some moments.*]

PAUL (*his ear to the wall*). I hear something — don't stop! Stand up on the barrel — she's coming!

[*The tune wobbles for a moment, as the Boy, with Paul's help, gets up on the barrel. His back is to audience as he plays, looking up at the top of the wall.*]

THE BOY (*stopping a moment — fiercely*). Hold my legs!

[*Paul puts his arms round the Boy's legs. The Boy plays on. Then the top of a ladder is seen against the other side of the wall. And, slowly and shyly, a young maiden with dark brown hair comes to view; she peeps timidly over the wall, sees the Boy, gives a frightened gasp, and disappears.*]

THE BOY (*stopping his music*). Ah, don't go — please — don't go!

PAUL (*in a hoarse whisper*). Blow — you fool — blow!

[*The Boy plays again. The Girl returns and looks over.*]

THE BOY (*stopping abruptly*). Oh, please don't go 'way
Please — (*A frightened pause*) How do you do?

[*Paul smiles; looks at Sentry who faces front.*]

THE GIRL (*in a frightened whisper, hardly audible*). How do you do!

[*Another pause. She makes a movement to go down again.*]

THE BOY. Please — oh, please — don't go away! I saw you in church yesterday — (*Pause*) Do you like church?

THE GIRL. Ye-es — (*She looks — Paul smiles — the Sentry nods*) Good-bye!

THE BOY. No, no — no — please — one moment. (*He wildly searches for a topic*) Do you like dogs?

[*Paul and the Sentry listen again.*]

THE GIRL. Ye-es.

[*Paul and the Sentry smile.*]

THE BOY. Oh, I'm so glad — I have — at least my father — has a dog — he's a fine dog — a dachshund! My name's David — what is yours?

THE GIRL. Hesta.

THE BOY (*with emotion*). Hesta!

THE GIRL. I thank you for your music — *David*.

[*Paul and the Sentry are pleased.*]

THE BOY. Thank you — for thanking me, I mean — I — you!

THE GIRL. Did you always get my flowers — *David*?

[*Paul puts the flowers behind his back. The Sentry leans forward.*]

THE BOY. Yes — see. (*Puts his hand in his blouse and brings out a bunch of withered flowers*) Here they are, all, every one — *Hesta*!

THE GIRL (*with tenderness*). Oh! (*Then demurely*) You like flowers?

THE BOY. Not really — only these — only the ones you gave me.

[Puts flowers back. The Girl smiles and turns away; so does the Sentry.]

THE GIRL. You play so well.

THE BOY. Oh, if I could only talk as I play. I want to tell you so much — I have told it all to you ever so many times on my flute. It comes so easy on my flute — what sounds so awkward on my lips.

[Paul and the Sentry still.]

THE GIRL. David — what does your music say?

THE BOY. It says — it says — I think you are the nicest girl in Nuremberg!

[Paul and the Sentry again look at her.]

THE GIRL *(abashed)*. Oh!

[Sinks slowly out of sight.]

THE BOY. No — no — I didn't mean that — please. I meant — *(As she comes up again with downcast eyes)* Now please don't go away — I meant — in all the world.

THE GIRL. Oh, that's worse.

[Paul and the Sentry smile.]

THE BOY. Please — Hesta — listen to what my music says. *(Plays on his flute, looking at her. She looks straight at him. He stops — and in a note of tenderness)* Can't you — understand?

THE GIRL *(in the same tone)*. Yes, I do — *(Paul and the Sentry smile)* no, no — I mean, of course I don't.

THE BOY. Please say you do —

THE GIRL. I do!

THE BOY. Oh —

THE GIRL. I think it's wrong —

THE BOY. Oh no — oh no!

[Here the Lamplighter comes in. The Girl drops behind the wall. He is a sleepy peasant, who goes to the lamp and lights it. The lovers watch him in terror. He falls asleep — leaning on his lighting-stick. The Sentry leans out and pokes him with his bayonet. The Lamplighter awakens with a start and hurries off — not noticing anything. The Sentry follows him, looking at David.]

BOY. Fräulein Hesta? —

[*The Girl comes up.*]

THE GIRL. Your father is Herr Budel, is he not? The Toy-maker!

THE BOY. Oh, yes! (*Proudly*) He makes the most beautiful dolls in the world!

THE GIRL. And you —

THE BOY (*still more proudly*). I paint the eyelashes on the dolls — which takes quite a steady hand, I can tell you!

THE GIRL. You paint the eyelashes on the dolls — oh, how difficult!

THE BOY (*proudly*). My father says I am an artist.

THE GIRL. I'm sure of it! I would so love to meet your father — I have always heard that he is the best loved man in Nuremberg.

THE BOY (*proudly*). Yes — and I'm his son! May I bring him to see you?

THE GIRL. Oh, yes — please!

THE BOY. And Nebuchadnezzar?

THE GIRL (*puzzled*). Nebuchadnezzar?

THE BOY. Yes — our dog.

THE GIRL. Oh — please — yes!

THE SENTRY (*enters, banging his gun on the ground and whispering*). The guard is coming — hurry, Comrade!

THE GIRL. What was that?

THE BOY. Nothing — Good-bye!

THE GIRL (*looking at him*). Good-bye!

[*A pause.*]

THE BOY (*reluctantly*). Good-bye!

THE GIRL. Good-bye!

[*Neither moves.*]

THE BOY (*putting up his hand*). Good-bye — Hesta!

THE GIRL (*reaching down her hand*). Good-bye — David.

THE BOY (*holding it*). Please, may I kiss your hand?

THE GIRL. Oh, no! (*He does so*) There — you've done it!

[*Crossly.*]

THE BOY (*tenderly*). God bless you!

[*The Girl disappears without a word.*]

THE BOY (*in agony*). Oh, please — I didn't mean to hurt you!

I didn't mean to hurt you —

THE GIRL (*shyly, peeping over the wall*). Of course I understood!

THE BOY (*bewildered and dazed*). Understood — what do you mean — understood what?

THE GIRL (*slowly and tenderly*). What your music meant, David.

[*Disappears in a flash.*]

THE BOY (*in rapture*). Oh!

[*Tries to climb the wall — the barrel upsets, and he tumbles down with a crash into the arms of Paul.*]

PAUL (*to David — after helping to pick him up*). Are you hurt, David, — oh, are you hurt?

THE BOY (*joyously*). No, no! Of course I'm not hurt! Come! Let's go and tell my father.

[*Music. Enter the Guard from left, the Sergeant carrying an old-fashioned lantern. In step to his music, the Boy comes down to them, still playing. Paul follows, dragging the barrel. The Guard marches off. The Boy falls into step and marches, gaily playing behind them — with his face towards the wall which is almost lost in darkness. Paul shoulders the barrel and falls into step. All exeunt.*]

END OF SCENE I

SCENE II

The Toymaker's.

A most wonderful room — tall and narrow. A high bow-window at rear, through which one sees the top of a high tower and the enormous face of a clock — only V, VI, and VII o'clock being visible. The great hands move slowly by, at stated intervals. The windows are leaded with diamond-shaped panes. A door to

left, with two steps leading up to it, and a wooden railing on either side. A wooden balcony at right, railed. Entrance at right. The bow-window alcove at rear. Each window has a window-seat, with worn and threadbare curtains of grey-vermillion. Table at rear on which is a big lamp with a green shade. The table is filled with pots of paint — and a sort of easel on which the Toymaker places each doll as he paints it. There is another table with a lamp and a small carpenter bench.

Shelves line the rear walls, on which are dolls' heads, masks, wooden soldiers, jumping-jacks, etc. Models of old-fashioned ships hang from the ceiling; also a huge pantomime mask of a giant, now dusty and shabby with age. Pictures are on the walls; also a comic cartoon and a series of smaller pictures telling a funny story.

Evening. Both lamps are lighted. The curtain goes up on the pealing of the chimes of Nuremberg, without. The clock strikes five. The Toymaker is seen sitting at the rear table, putting dolls' heads on with infinite care. He is dressed in a long, light blue blouse, covered with every conceivable colour of dried paint, where he has wiped his brushes. The Toymaker is a tiny, wistful old man, with a high, bald head and surprised, wistful eyes. He wears enormous tortoise-shell spectacles at the end of his nose when he works. He works as if he loved it beyond life. The chimes grow fainter. A cane and picture are on a chair.

And the audience hear him breathlessly, softly, whistling a simple child song. He stops when his work gets difficult. Then he begins again with renewed vigour when the difficulty is overcome. It is more like a wheeze than a whistle. A timid knock is heard at the door. The Toymaker, lost to the world, whistles and works on. The door opens and two little Girls come in, mothering an even smaller Boy. They come and stand with backs to audience, close to the Toymaker, and watch him work with the profound attention of childhood.

FIRST CHILD (after a long pause). Please, Herr Toymaker, we have come to see how the dolls are born! (The Toymaker turns and stares at them with his brush in the air, a doll, steadied in his other hand, — all the while whistling his little air. A pause)

Please, Herr Toymaker, we have come to see how dolls are born. You told us we could!

THE TOYMAKER (*with mystery, as he holds the doll up*). You have to see how the dolls are born! Watch! (*The Children at once sit down and look up at him*) This is a lady — she is almost ready to love her little mama!

[*Continues whistling.*]

FIRST CHILD. Isn't she finished yet?

THE TOYMAKER (*more mysteriously*). Not yet! I have to give her a heart before she can love!

[*Continues whistling.*]

FIRST CHILD. How do you give her a heart, Herr Toymaker?

THE TOYMAKER. Ssst! To give her a heart is very difficult! A slip of my hand and —— It is very difficult — watch! (*Picks up a little red paper heart*) Here is the heart, see — I put it (*does so*) inside this little doll — so — and — now she is born. [*Holds it up. The door opens and a very pretty woman of fifty enters. She stands and smiles at the group, half hidden off right.*]

FIRST CHILD. May we have her, please? — Herr Toymaker?

TOYMAKER (*flustered*). Oh! — Oh! Oh, no — I am sorry — this lady and all these other ladies are for little children like you in America! Sometimes I wonder how my little people fare out over there. If their hands and eyes and arms and legs are pulled off! The outside world is a hard place! (*becomes lost in thought*) — a hard place!

THE BOY (*crying, half rising*). Boo-hoo! I want ze dolly!

TOYMAKER (*frightened*). Please — please! I'm sorry! (*Picks up a Jack-in-the-box and lets it off. It jumps three feet in the air. The Children scream and get up*) Here! I've got this for you — see!

FIRST CHILD. Has it got a heart, too, Herr Toymaker?

TOYMAKER. A heart! No, he couldn't do what he does if he had!

THE BOY. Boo-hoo — I wantz ze dolly!

[*The little Boy keeps on crying till he gets the doll; then laughs.*]

TOYMAKER. Hush — sssh! — here — take her, quick — and run away before I change my mind or my wife sees me.

[*Gives Jack to the Girl, running to the door, and doll to the Boy.*

CHILDREN. Thank you, Herr Toymaker!

TOYMAKER. Be good to her — she is alive — she is born — her heart is very new — it might break! Good-bye!

CHILDREN. Good-bye, Herr Toymaker!

[*Exeunt down left. He stands waving to them. He takes off his spectacles — wipes them — and, beginning to whistle eagerly again, he trots back to his table and is about to sit.*

FRAU BUDEL (*sternly*). Abraham!

TOYMAKER (*overcome with guilt*). Oh, is that you, Emma!

FRAU BUDEL (*going towards him, sternly*). Yes, it's "me Emma"!

Why did you give away that good doll? It's worth one mark!

Can I never stop you? How can we live if you give away everything you make!

TOYMAKER. Please, the little fellow, he wanted it, — he said he wanted it! When a child cries, — (*looks at her*) Emma, we don't like to hear a child's cry! — do we? And you — please — you mustn't scold on our wedding-day. [*Sits.*

FRAU BUDEL (*coming to him, and putting her arms about him, with tenderness in her voice*). Oh, Abraham, please — please try and be wise.

TOYMAKER (*nodding his head*). I'll try.

[*Goes back to work.*

FRAU BUDEL. Yes — you must (*crosses*) because we have heard this rumour — (*Toymaker is interested*) — how in America — in Kansas City — dolls are going out of fashion, and these fur bears are what the children like more.

TOYMAKER (*rises and goes up, stopping work*). Yes, these Teddy Bears! Pooh — (*comes back*) it's nonsense — A child's a child — and a doll — well — is a doll!

[*Crosses left.*

FRAU BUDEL. I know, but, Abraham, it's all the more reason why you should not give away your dolls, but try and save your money. It's a warning to you!

TOYMAKER. Yes, Emma!

FRAU BUDEL. This is our wedding-day, Abraham. (*She sits. To him*) We've been married all these years — all these years — and if we had saved our money we wouldn't have been so poor now, nor would you have to work on a salary for this American firm.

TOYMAKER. Yes, I'm a spendthrift.

FRAU BUDEL. And there's our son David, — you don't want him to run away, as our first boy — Adolph, — did — do you?

TOYMAKER. No! Adolph — how long has he been away now?

FRAU BUDEL. Twenty years! Our first boy — Oh, Abraham, not a line, not a letter for such a long time!

TOYMAKER (*consolingly patting her shoulder*). Only four years ago, Emma! He was in — was in — was in — oh, yes — Col-o-rado S — Sprinks!

FRAU BUDEL. I only ask you — dear Abraham — to be careful — be a little more selfish — think of yourself — and me — and David. The world is not what it was — it has grown so commercial — all is business now — and self!

TOYMAKER (*nodding*). You're right, Emma, as you always are, my dear. I'll be selfish! Yes — I'll be selfish!

FRAU BUDEL (*putting her cheek to his heart*). Please — oh, please try, my dear boy! (*To him, with her hand on his shoulder*) Now!

TOYMAKER. I will — all will be for self — all will be business now!

FRAU BUDEL (*feeling his coat where her face rested*). Why, what is this you've got in your pocket, Abraham?

TOYMAKER. Eh? (*Feels his breast-pocket for a moment, then, with excitement coming into his face*) Ach! I almost forgot! Oh, my goodness — I almost forgot — (*Brings out a little jewel-case and opens it; puts the box on the table; it contains a simple gold bracelet. He holds it up*) See — see, my Emma — (*she backs away a little*) my wedding present.

FRAU BUDEL. What?

TOYMAKER (*proudly*). A diamond!

[*Leaning on chair. Eyes down.*]

FRAU BUDEL (*weeping and laughing*). Oh, Abraham, what shall I do with you!

TOYMAKER (*childishly*). I don't know, Emma, I don't know! See — it is a little fellow — but he is there all the same!

FRAU BUDEL. Oh, Abraham!

TOYMAKER. And see. (*Holds it up. Goes to her*) I have had it written here — inside — here — I hold it so — so! There — see — (*Tenderness coming into his voice as he reads*) “Love is my wealth” — Can you see it?

[*She tries to read, but cannot for tears, and takes up his hand and kisses it with a sob.*]

FRAU BUDEL. My dear boy — my dear boy!

TOYMAKER (*holding her tightly*). “Love is my wealth.” Now let me put it on — so! (*She holds up her hand, and he is putting it on when there is a heavy, military knock at the door. They rise, still holding hands like embarrassed children. Guiltily*) We are caught — Emma! (*A shy pause*) Come in! (*Enter the Sergeant and the Poet. The Sergeant carries a hand-mirror in a paper parcel, and the Poet an enormous bouquet of flowers*) We are caught! — Ah, Sergeant Strumpf — Ah, Stauffenbach!

THE SERGEANT. We saw your boy just now, studying the twilight.

POET (*brushes Sergeant aside*). Hush! (*Crosses to centre*) Madam, we two old fellows come to congratulate the bride!

FRAU BUDEL (*deprecatingly*). A bride! A forty years old bride — oh!

THE SERGEANT (*crossly*). The bride, Madam! — and we have brought you a token of our deep affection — and (*To her. Quickly giving her the hand-mirror*) — and — you have always been a nice girl, Emma!

FRAU BUDEL (*Budel encourages the Poet to begin*). Oh, thank you, Jonathan!

POET (*Coming down left. Emma hides mirror. Histrionically*). In all the course of my political career as a poet, I have never been so moved as in this present festive and triumphal occasion. I remember — years ago —

BUDEL. Emma!!

SERGEANT (*gruffly*). Halt! No memories!

POET (*Budel pacifies him*). Pshaw! You have spoilt my speech now! Sergeant Strumpf! (*Sergeant goes up*) Emma — your old friend loves you like a brother, and he gives you these poor flowers with the hope (*Sergeant laughs*) — with the hope —

BUDEL. Ha — ha —

POET. — with the hope. (*Giving it up and gaily*) Come, Jonathan, we kiss the bride!

[*Then kisses her hand. Sergeant pushes him aside — and kisses her on the cheek. Emma puts things on chair.*]

TOYMAKER. Dear — dear old fellows — the two presents! (*Crosses to Emma. Quickly*) Emma, bring our presents!

[*She brings back bouquet and mirror first.*]

BUDEL. No! No! Our presents!

[*Laugh between Emma and Budel, as she hands presents. She brings a cane and a picture.*]

TOYMAKER. This cane for you, old Poet, friend, see — it is tall and has a tassel. You can make fine attitudes with it!

[*Hands cane.*]

POET. Oh, I've dreamt of a cane like this — (*Emma puts picture behind her back. Brings cane up and nearly strikes Sergeant with it; steps back*) — how did you know I wanted it, Abraham?

TOYMAKER. Have I not known you for forty years! And you, my old friend, Sergeant Strumpf — you who have fought in a hundred battles and been covered in glory — you who have more medals than most generals! I have for you a picture of your old commander — that man who was called "The Silent in Seven Languages".

[*The Toymaker puts the picture on the mantel-piece. The old Soldier hobbles up to it, lifts up the patch over his eye and looks at it a long time in silence, — then salutes it, — and turns in a broken voice to the Toymaker.*]

SERGEANT. That — that was kind of you, Abraham! (A

pause as he stares at the picture) When my brother died — he — (*Points tremblingly at the picture*) He wrote me!

[*All talk at once to cover his weakness, when a bell is heard.*

Frau Budel runs to the window and looks down into the street.

FRAU BUDEL. It's Herr Kronfeldt, your employer, — he's coming to see you on business.

TOYMAKER. Please all of you leave me with him. (*Sergeant takes picture*) Please — only a moment. Emma — take them into the other room and open that Bocksbuttel bottle, — the one with the red wax, on the lower shelf!

[*She starts. Sergeant crosses stage, followed by Poet.*

FRAU BUDEL. Oh, can't I stay, Abraham? [*Stops.*

TOYMAKER. No, please, I have something to say to him. It's all business now — all business. (*A knock at the door. Frau Budel, with the two Men, exits*) Come in!

[*Enter Herr Kronfeldt, a fat, pale-faced, fair-haired man. He is dressed in a tall hat and frock coat, and carries a huge brown paper parcel, tied with string.*

KRONFELDT (*standing in the doorway and mopping his head with a silk handkerchief*). Phew! Those stairs! [*Puts parcel down.*

TOYMAKER. Come in, Herr Kronfeldt!

KRONFELDT. No, I've only come for a minute. Budel, have you changed your mind?

TOYMAKER. No, sir!

KRONFELDT. I'm sorry, for then I'll have to cut your wages down one half!

TOYMAKER (*nodding*). 'Yes, sir!

KRONFELDT. It's your own fault, Budel, — you should try and keep up with the times. I tell you, dolls have gone out of fashion in Kansas City; the children like these bears better!

TOYMAKER. Yes — the "Teddy Bears!"

KRONFELDT (*pompously*). Yes — the "Teddy Bears"! I want you to give up making your dolls — which I admit are the best there are — and make these bears now!

TOYMAKER. Please — I can't — I am sorry — but my life is with my dolls. My father — and his father, and his father

before him, have always made these dolls. (*Holds one up*) It's not human nature, Herr Kronfeldt, to change now, and make these bears! No! I can't do it — I can't do it!

KRONFELDT (*kindly*). I know it's hard, but I only want you to try, Budel. I want you to try. You have been our best worker, and I don't want to lose you! Here — I have (*begins to untie the parcel*) brought one of these fur bears — these Teddy Bears — for you to work from. (*Produces a large, white, grinning bear, and holds it up*) There — isn't it a beauty?

TOYMAKER. No, sir. (*Budel puts on his glasses*) I can't see any beauty in it compared to a doll. There is no scope for art. (*Kronfeldt lowers the bear*) I can't do it.

KRONFELDT. The man in America has made a fortune out of these bears. (*Budel shakes his head in a dazed way*) They call him over there the "Teddy Bear King!"

[*Holds bear up.*]

TOYMAKER. "The Teddy Bear King!"

KRONFELDT (*puts it on shelf*). Yes, that's it. Well, now I'll leave it (*points to bear*) with you — perhaps you'll change your mind. If you don't — remember — I'll have to cut your wages!

TOYMAKER. Yes, sir!

KRONFELDT. Good-evening!

TOYMAKER. Good-night, sir! — Oh, how is Fräulein Hesta, your daughter?

KRONFELDT. Well, I thank you, Budel. Again — good-night. Oh, I forgot to tell you about these bears, — you see the legs and arms are adjustable! So!

[*Works its arms and legs.*]

TOYMAKER. Yes, sir!

KRONFELDT. Good-night!

TOYMAKER. Good-night, sir!

(*Exit Kronfeldt. The Toymaker is left alone. He walks up to the bear on table. He stares at it, adjusting his spectacles and sitting down before it*) You bad wild beast — (*backs a step*) — you come into this house like the wolf! Is it *my* fault that children like my dolls no more — in that Kansas City! So

you are the devourer of my trade! No, I won't — you are bad — you are hideous — I won't make you! I'll have my wages cut. I am too proud to make — Teddy Bears! [Sits. *Enter the Boy, timidly and noiselessly, at door. He tiptoes towards his father, showing, in every line of his figure and attitude, fear of his father's anger. The Toymaker mutters aloud at the Teddy Bear, which makes the Boy start. He finally goes up to his father and kneels beside him, yearningly. A pause. The Toymaker mutters to himself.*

THE BOY (*in a frightened whisper*). Father!

TOYMAKER. "The Teddy Bear King" — is he!

BOY. Father — listen to me!

TOYMAKER. David — ah! (*Then angry*) These bears, David, these bears, they fill me with anger!

BOY (*pleadingly*). Father!

TOYMAKER (*looking at the Boy's face*). My son — what has happened, — what is this look on your face?

BOY (*weakly*). Father!

TOYMAKER. My son — my boy — what is this?

BOY. Please, sir, Love has come into my heart!

TOYMAKER (*gently*). What! (*The Toymaker turns completely around, awe and respect coming into his face*) You mean — David — you love someone?

THE BOY (*fearfully*). Yes — Father!

TOYMAKER (*putting his arm on the boy's shoulder, in an awed voice*). Do you realize, my son, what you say!

BOY (*draws back*). Yes, Father! I do. I did hope you would not be angry!

TOYMAKER. Angry! Me! Why — David! It is like finding treasure in the sands! My son — I have prayed for this!

BOY (*with joy*). Oh, Father!

TOYMAKER (*swings Boy to his left, then rises*). I rejoice — my son! Emma! Strumpf! Stauffenbach! Come — come in! Ah, this is wonderful — wonderful! — and only a moment since I was sad and unhappy about bears; — but now I rejoice! God has been good!

[*Enter Emma and the others.*

FRAU BUDEL. What — what is the matter?

TOYMAKER. Our son — our (*laughs happily*) baby, here, has found his love lady!

ALL THREE. What!

TOYMAKER (*almost hopping with excitement*). Yes — yes — yes! and we must have a feast! Here — Strumpf — order at the caterer's — beer — icing cakes — all! Where is she — (*to the Boy*) I must call on her — you must help me dress! My Sunday tie — the green coat with the brass buttons down here (*points*), I must make a good impression — as the father of the bridegroom!

FRAU BUDEL. But — Abraham — our son — he only paints eyelashes on dolls!

TOYMAKER. *Well — Madam!*

[*Arms around the Boy.*]

FRAU BUDEL. How can he marry? He has no money, — he can't keep a wife on dolls' eyelashes! (*Turns and steps to Poet and Sergeant*) Dear Abraham, you must know that it is impossible for our son to marry!

TOYMAKER. Impossible! — you tell me this? — when God has blessed us so! — and brought love into our home! Have you forgotten how *we* got married! You talk of painting eyelashes! Pshaw! you and I got married on one mark — and look at us now —

FRAU BUDEL. Abraham!

TOYMAKER. What has brought us here — step by step — stone by stone? Emma, this miracle of love! Love! You talk — everyone talks — of the world getting hard — cold business — all for self! Do you think I could have sat at that table there — (*points*) day in and day out — working — and working — till my back is bent out of shape and my fingers crooked — for *self*? No — love for you, my Emma (*goes to her*), did it, love will *always* do it! — and yet, you come to me and talk of his not getting married because he paints eyelashes on dolls and has no money! Shame! Shame!

FRAU BUDEL (*weeping*). Abraham!

TOYMAKER. No — I am cross. (*Rises*) I appeal to my old friends here! Strumpf — do you believe in this love?

SERGEANT (*gruffly*). I'll tell you how much I believe in love — I won these honours for a girl. She wouldn't have me. I'd give all — everything for one day of my youth.

TOYMAKER (*going and putting his hand on the Sergeant's shoulder*). Old friend! (*A pause*) And you, my poet friend — do you believe in this love?

[*Sergeant sits down. Toymaker steps to the Poet.*]

POET (*proudly and slowly*). It has made me the man I am!
[*Sweeps up to bench and sits.*]

TOYMAKER. There! You see! (*Then gaily*) Emma — quick — I must go out at once and meet her. Come — and get my clothes for me! (*A pause*) Gott in Himmel! — I forgot to ask, — who is the girl, David?

BOY. Fräulein Hesta Kronfeldt!

[*Rises.*]

TOYMAKER (*pleased*). What! My employer's daughter!

BOY. Yes, Father!

TOYMAKER. Ah, Kronfeldt will indeed be pleased! He has always liked David. Come — I must go! (*Frau Budel exits. Shyly*) Listen, David — (*The Boy crosses to him*) You go on, and tell Fräulein Hesta your old father's coming to see her!

BOY. Bring Nebuchadnezzar — she wants to see him, too.

TOYMAKER. She does? — There — didn't I tell you she was a nice girl! She likes dogs!

[*Exit. As the Boy goes towards the door, the Sergeant speaks to him.*]

SERGEANT. Good luck — my boy!

POET. Good luck!

BOY. Thank you, sir —

[*Exit. The Sergeant and Poet are left alone. There is silence as they simultaneously take out their pipes, and fill and light them.*]

POET (*after a pause*). Well, sir!

SERGEANT (*with a grunt*). Umph! [*They turn together.*]

POET. I'm afraid the girl's father won't be so enthusiastic as we are!

SERGEANT. Kronfeldt won't hear of it! David has nothing!

POET. Neither have we!

SERGEANT (*smoking*). Neither have we!

POET. You are the soldier — you have been taught to plan and attack. Now, what can we do to help Abraham and these young people?

SERGEANT. Let me think. (*Pause, as both smoke in silence*) Ah!

POET. What?

SERGEANT. I might kill Kronfeldt. [*A pause.*]

POET. The idea is good — but — diplomacy is better!

SERGEANT (*turns to him*). You think so?

POET (*turns*). Yes — I think so!

SERGEANT. Ah! (*They both become lost in thought again, smoking silently. A timid knock is heard at the door. Gruffly*) Come in! (*Enter Paul, who stands breathless. Sharply*) Well, sir?

PAUL. Please — please — has David been here?

SERGEANT. Yes — he's gone.

PAUL. Oh!

[*Hesitating.*]

SERGEANT. Well, sir?

PAUL. Ple-ase — do you know if David told his father anything? I've come to hear how Herr Budel took it!

POET. All is well. Abraham was well pleased, and so are we! Abraham goes now to see Herr Kronfeldt.

PAUL (*awestruck*). Ah! — But —

SERGEANT. Well, sir?

PAUL. I don't think Herr Kronfeldt will like it — he is a very ferocious man!

POET (*rises*). That's just what we've been saying, my boy! Have you any idea of what we can do to help them? [*Turns to Paul.*]

PAUL (*dolefully*). No, sir. (*He speaks wisely. Both men look at each other*) I don't know what to do.

POET. We can't have Abraham's heart broken.

PAUL. No, sir.

POET. Nor the young people's, either! What can we do?

PAUL (*as the Poet turns to him*). Please, sir (*takes out a book*),

I read in this book — about a young couple, who were almost the same as David and Fräulein Hesta!

SERGEANT. Well, sir! (*Paul turns to him*) What did they do?

PAUL (*to Sergeant*). They eloped, sir!

SERGEANT. Eloped!

POET (*steps down*). Eloped! (*Paul looks at Poet*) It's against our law — but the fathers generally come round — once it's done!

SERGEANT. Young man — you will be a general!

PAUL. Yes, sir!

SERGEANT. Your idea is a brilliant one — (*To Poet*) Abraham would like nothing better. It's what he calls "romantic," eh?

POET. Yes, it's beautiful! It could be arranged for next week some time.

SERGEANT (*banging the table*). To-night, sir!

PAUL (*to Sergeant*). But — sir!

POET. But —

SERGEANT (*Bangs the table. Paul retires a little — scared. With a roar*). To-night! I'm a soldier — and I've learned one thing. In a plan of action — act at once!

POET (*puts cane down*). But it's too sudden — the young people are not ready! It's too quick!

SERGEANT. Silence! No broken reeds here! How does one elope, my poet friend?

POET (*puzzled*). How does one elope?

PAUL (*as the Poet turns on him*). Please, sir, in the books they always elope in a coach and six!

SERGEANT. Well, we'll make it a coach and one. (*Rises*) We'll go and hire it at once! In an hour's time!

POET (*as the Sergeant turns to him*). I protest — it's too sudden, Sergeant Strumpf. The young girl will surely object —

SERGEANT. Bah! — you're a fool!

POET. A fool, sir!

SERGEANT. Can't you see if the girl is afraid to elope, then she is not worth the boy's love — and we are well rid of her?

POET (*in admiration*). You are right, you old war fox!

SERGEANT. Come, let us go hire the wagon — and then go to Kronfeldt's while Abraham is there.

[*Going toward the door.*]

POET. Wait — a coach and one costs money! [*Puts his cane down.*]

SERGEANT. Good Gott — we are done for at the start!

POET. No, — no, we are not — here is this watch. (*Looks up and kisses watch, — a gold one which he takes out and puts on the table*) It belonged to Schiller! It's gold — that will pay for the coach — and perhaps a little more left over. I'm afraid that's all I have — of material value — [*Puts it on the table.*]

SERGEANT. They must have some more money besides paying for the coach! I'm afraid I have nothing — er — er — with me! (*Scratches his head; then sees his medals*) These things (*points to them*) — they might bring something!

POET. Oh, no — not those! Please — we have enough now, I'm sure!

SERGEANT (*unpinning them one by one*). This one — I won at Sedan. — This at Sadova — and this — and this — (*Puts them in a heap with the watch*) And this, I wanted it here on my breast in the grave. — I think I keep it. Bah! What are such fleeting honours to a boy's happiness! (*Poet sighs*) Lead us, boy, to the pawn-shop on the corner.

[*The two exeunt solemnly, arm in arm, Paul going first. Then there is a pause. The Toymaker enters with his wife and the dog. He is dressed in a light green coat, — a faded yellow waistcoat, a flaming red tie, white trousers, tight fitting and showing his ankles, and blue and white striped socks. His feet are in gaudy carpet slippers. He carries an enormous buff-coloured top hat, with a brown band. A huge red silk handkerchief hangs out of his coat tails. His wife follows him with his shoes,*

— little black ones, lined with white. She also carries a pink ribbon.

TOYMAKER. There — how do I look — (*Emma kneels to dog, swings round*) I'll make an impression — yes? Emma — you think I please as the father of the bridegroom?

FRAU BUDEL (*tying a large pink bow on the dog's collar*). No woman could resist you, Abraham. (*Picking flowers off chair*) Here — take this bouquet the poet gave me —

TOYMAKER. Oh, no — that is for you — it is yours —

FRAU BUDEL. Nonsense — Heinrich wouldn't mind its being used for such a good cause. You see, he'll make two people happy — kill two birds with one bouquet!

TOYMAKER (*taking it*). Yes — the idea is good. It will please her!

FRAU BUDEL. Now, good-bye — and good luck to you both! (*Budel watches her. He kisses her. She turns, sees shoes, and picks them up. He holds her a moment, wistfully. Then she, with the same wistfulness, speaks*) He must have — he was so full of romance! That is why he wanted to go to America to seek his fortune! Oh, why did you let him go — Abraham!

TOYMAKER. I could not keep him here to be unhappy —

FRAU BUDEL. Oh, let's pray she is a sweet girl, Abraham! I've seen her in church and in the street — once or twice — but never to speak to. She seems a nice girl. (*A sudden crash of broken china is heard without*) Oh, what have you broken now, Minna?

MINNA (*shrilly*). Please — Frau Budel — the yellow dish!

FRAU BUDEL. The yellow dish! — Oh, I must go — the yellow dish. Abraham! (*Hurriedly kissing him*) Good-bye! Now here are the yellow dishes — don't forget them, and go call on the young lady in your carpet slippers!

TOYMAKER (*childishly*). No, Emma — good-bye.

FRAU BUDEL (*as she goes off*). The yellow dish — the yellow dish.

[*Exits. The Toymaker is left alone. He puts on his hat, takes his cane, holds the dog by the lead, and carries the enormous bouquet. He also carries his shoes carefully in his right hand*

He walks absent-mindedly toward the door, hesitates, as he sees the Teddy Bear, and halts in front of it. He looks wistfully at it for some time. Then, in a slightly nervous and abashed voice, he speaks.

TOYMAKER. What I said to you in anger a few minutes ago — I am sorry for! I didn't mean you — personally, Teddy Bear! (*A pause as he looks at it*) Please — I didn't mean to hurt your feelings!

[He turns and goes slowly and absent-mindedly out in his carpet slippers, wheezing his little tune; leading his dog; the bouquet in his left hand and carefully carrying his shoes in his right. As he goes the bells peal out and the curtain falls on a burst of chimes and music.]

END OF ACT I.

ACT II

Inside the Walled Garden. Kronfeldt's house. Moonlight. The stage is enclosed by the wall at left and rear. An old wooden door is in the wall. Over wall, the housetops are seen of the ancient city of Nuremberg, — church spires and quaint misshapened chimneys — all half-silhouetted by a full moon. At right is Kronfeldt's house, with entrance, — three steps curved, — leading to the main door. The lower windows are lighted. A table is set for dinner, with a lamp burning on it.

The Girl is disclosed, finishing her dinner alone in the garden. Lena, the fat cook, is removing the dishes and taking them into the house. The garden is full of flowers, the wall covered in vines, and the trees meet overhead — giving a comfortable, sheltered appearance to the scene. Lena goes off with dishes and returns.

THE GIRL. When will my father be back — Lena?

THE COOK. He dines with the Burgomaster; he will be back early, Fräulein Hesta!

[About to light lamp.]

THE GIRL. No, don't take in the lamp, Lena — please leave it.

I'll wait out here for him; it is so hot in the house.

THE COOK. But here — it is so lonesome, Fräulein Hesta! Are you not afraid?

[*Song begins.*]

THE GIRL. Oh no, why should I be? It is so peaceful here! (*sighs deeply*) and — and wonderful! (*Picks up her sewing and works in silence, as Lena clears away the things on the table, taking them into the house and returning. On her return the Girl looks shyly up at her, and asks in a low voice*)

What more do you know of the Toymaker, Lena?

THE COOK. What, still the Toymaker, Fräulein Hesta!

THE GIRL. Yes, I am interested in him, Lena!

THE COOK (*takes things*). I have told you everything I know of him twice over; stop — I forgot about his son, Adolf!

THE GIRL (*puzzled*). His son Adolf?

THE COOK. Yes, he has two sons — one Adolf and one David.

THE GIRL (*shyly*). Yes — David. (*Interestedly*) Yes, Lena!

THE COOK (*explaining with a spoon*). Well, the boy Adolf — pah — it is twenty years or more — he was a wild boy, and wanted to go to America. His father, the Toymaker, instead of giving him a whipping and keeping him at home, like a fool went and paid his passage over there, and sent him off.

THE GIRL. Where is he now, Lena?

THE COOK. Somewhere there; he writes once in four or five years. That's what I call an ungrateful son! It serves Abraham Budel right — children are never grateful.

THE GIRL (*timidly*). And — and David — Lena?

THE COOK (*in disgust*). What, the younger one — pah! He is a fool — always playing on his flute. His mind is just like his father's — always in the clouds!

THE GIRL (*thoughtfully*). Oh!

THE COOK. Yes, he paints the eyelashes on the dolls!

THE GIRL. Oh!

THE COOK. I leave you now, Fräulein Hesta. I'll be in the kitchen. Ring the bell if you want me. Your father will be home before I've finished the dishes.

THE GIRL. Thank you, Lena!

[*Exit the Cook heavily. A long silence. Music low and ex-*

pectant. The Girl lets the sewing drop into her lap as she stares in front of her. Sighs and then takes up her sewing again, and works quietly. A church bell is heard ringing eight o'clock in the old city beyond. Then the tramp, tramp, of soldiers on the other side of the wall. Gruff orders are heard of changing the guard, same as in Scene I, of Act I. The Cook hobbles out from the house with a shawl, which she puts on the Girl's shoulders.

THE COOK. I thought you might need this, — the night air is chilly!

THE GIRL. Thank you, Lena!

THE COOK (*crossing to house, stopping and looking up at the moon and taking a deep breath*). What a beautiful summer night it is, Fräulein Hesta!

THE GIRL. It's wonderful — one can hear the world's heart beat on nights like these!

THE COOK (*staring at her across the lamp*). What a funny thing to say! Fräulein Hesta, the world has no heart.

THE GIRL (*timidly*). Hasn't it?

THE COOK. No — of course not! (*Two notes on chimes. The Girl smiles*) The world has no heart.

[*Exits in the house. A pause. The Girl continues to sew quietly; then faintly in the distance a flute is heard playing the little love air of David's. It stops. The Girl rises, drops her sewing, and listens, panting with excitement, both hands on her heart. She listens intently — it begins again. She runs to the door of the house and listens, — then softly shuts it — and runs to a climbing rose-bush, plucks a red rose, and waits at the foot of wall. The ladder is seen leaning against it. The flute comes nearer and nearer, and then halts, outside the wall. The Girl throws the rose over; the playing stops and then the Boy is seen clambering up; with breathless effort he succeeds, after a struggle, in getting one leg and arm over; then he smiles at her excitedly — breathless and embarrassed.*]

THE GIRL. Oh — take care, you'll hurt yourself!

THE BOY (*smiling excitedly and panting*). No — I'm used to it.

THE GIRL. Oh!

THE BOY. Please — my father's coming!

THE GIRL. Oh, that is nice.

THE BOY. Is your father here?

THE GIRL. No — David — he has gone to dine with the Burgomaster. He'll be back soon.

THE BOY (*still panting*). Oh! (*Gives another clutch at the wall as he feels himself slipping*) You — you will like my father!

THE GIRL. I am sure I will! But won't you come inside and wait?

THE BOY (*struggling with his hold and overcome with shyness at the same time*). Oh, no — please — I'll stay here!

THE GIRL. Oh — please — come in.

THE BOY (*climbing on the top of the wall and sitting on it, his legs dangling in front*). I'll sit on the wall here.

THE GIRL. But it is not comfortable for you there!

THE BOY. Oh, yes — please — it's very comfortable. (*The Girl goes back to her sewing and begins to sew in silence. The Boy swings his legs and regards her. Still embarrassed. Out of breath — panting*) Do — do you like the moonlight?

THE GIRL (*in a low voice*). Oh, yes.

THE BOY (*still puffing*). What did you say?

THE GIRL. I said — oh, yes!

THE BOY. Oh! (*Another pause*) So do I.

THE GIRL (*shyly*). Oh!

THE BOY (*anxiously*). What did you say?

THE GIRL. I — I said "oh"!

THE BOY (*smiles*). Oh!

[*Climbs down the wall and, trembling, goes and stands in front of her.*]

THE GIRL (*drops her sewing and looks up at him*). Oh!

THE BOY (*with deep tenderness*). Do you like to sew?

THE GIRL (*hardly audible*). Yes — very much.

[*An awkward pause.*]

THE BOY. I — I told my father!

[*A step to her.*]

THE GIRL (*frightened*). Oh — what did he say?

THE BOY. He was glad — Hes — Hesta!

THE GIRL (*sewing diligently*). I'm glad — David!

THE BOY (*goes to her at end of table*). I think — I think you are the nicest girl in Nuremberg.

THE GIRL. I think — you are the nicest boy.

THE BOY (*moves to her*). Oh — you do —— !

THE GIRL. Ye-es — David.

[*He takes her hand. She makes a movement to draw it away.*]

THE BOY. Please — don't — oh, please don't!

[*Holds it. They remain so for a moment.*]

THE GIRL. When did you first — first like me, David?

THE BOY (*tenderly*). Oh — for years — and years — and years!

THE GIRL (*puts basket down*). You've always liked me?

THE BOY (*very tenderly*). Always! Always! But it is not "like" at all — Hesta — it is love.

THE GIRL (*frightened*). Love!

[*Takes her hand away.*]

THE BOY (*drawing away*). Oh, yes — it is love — it is love, — it hurts me so!

THE GIRL. Oh, I am frightened! You are saying something very — very serious! I am frightened!

THE BOY. So am I. It is serious — Hesta, it is!

THE GIRL (*shivering*). Oh, I am frightened, David!

THE BOY. Let me hold you close — in my arms — so! (*Takes her gently in his arms*) Please — you cannot be frightened now! Are you? (*The Girl says nothing, but quietly clings to him and bursts into tears*) Don't cry — please don't cry! I wouldn't have you cry! I mustn't have you cry. Oh no! [*Shakes his head enquiringly at her.*]

THE GIRL (*tearfully*). David — I am frightened because — because — it is so serious — and solemn — and you are so — so kind!

THE BOY. May I kiss you, my Hesta?

THE GIRL (*drying her eyes and holding up her face tearfully and childishly*). Please — yes!

[*The Boy kisses her lightly; then she rises and they stand away from each other and regard each other in awe.*]

THE BOY (*holding out his arms, with deep feeling in his voice*).
Come!

[*She goes quietly to him and puts her head on his shoulder. They stand so in silence, both very moved and tender. Then a timid knock is heard on the gate.*]

DAVID. Someone's knocking.

THE GIRL (*standing away from him*). It is my father, David.

DAVID (*running and looking through the little grate*). No — it is mine!

THE GIRL. Wait a minute. (*She runs up above, around to table, picks up her work-basket and sits*) Show him in, David.

THE BOY. All right! (*She goes to her seat and picks up her sewing as the Boy unbolts and opens the gate. Quietly*) Come in, Father!

[*In walks the Toymaker, leading the dog, carrying a huge bouquet in his left hand and his shoes in his right. He is still in his carpet slippers. Boy closes gate, comes back.*]

TOYMAKER (*smiling absently at his son*). Here I am — David.

THE BOY (*nervously looking from his carpet slippers to his shoes in his hand*) Ye-es, Father!

TOYMAKER. Please — where is she?

[*Girl watches over her shoulder and laughs through the scene*]

THE BOY (*in a whisper*). She is here, Father — but your feet — Father!

TOYMAKER (*looking at his feet — absently*). My feet — David!

THE BOY. You've forgot to put on your shoes; you've got on your carpet slippers!

TOYMAKER (*gazing at his feet*). Oh! (*Holds up his shoes to David*) See! And Emma told me I would! Please stand in front of me — so — hide me — here — hold Nebuchadnezzar! These flowers — so! (*Sits down on the ground*) I change!

THE BOY (*holding dog and bouquet, and hiding his father from the girl*). Be quick, Father.

TOYMAKER (*Working hard. Simply*). Yes — David — yes! I am quick! — Hide me! There — so! (*He gets his shoes on*)

rises, puts slippers under chair, takes back his dog and the bouquet) Now — so — take me to her!

[Girl becomes serious.

THE BOY (*leading his father to her*). Fräulein Hesta! (*The Girl rises, putting aside her sewing*) Let me present to you — my father — Herr Abraham Budel! The Toymaker!

[She curtsies low. He bows with an old-world grace.

TOYMAKER (*fiercely whispering, nodding at the dog he is carrying*). Now him!

THE BOY. And Nebuchadnezzar — our dog!

[Budel bows.

THE GIRL. Eh!

THE TOYMAKER. Young lady — please, these flowers —

[Holds them out to her.

THE GIRL. Thank you — Herr Budel.

[She takes them.

TOYMAKER. Your mother's —

THE BOY. Ah —

[Relieved. An embarrassed pause, as all look on the ground.

THE GIRL. Please, Herr Budel, won't you sit down?

TOYMAKER. Sit down?

THE GIRL. My father will be here soon!

TOYMAKER. Thank you! (*Gives dog to Boy, who exits with him. Sits down beside the table, near the lamp which lights up the little group. Very nervous, and giving her a shy look; then smiling at her*) Please, I am scared.

[Watches Boy take dog off.

THE GIRL (*startled*). Oh, please — don't be!

TOYMAKER (*smiling*). You young people have such fine modern education! I suppose you know a great deal! History! Geography! (*smiling*) and insides of pollywoggles — yes?

THE GIRL (*laughing*). I ought to know — but I am so stupid.

TOYMAKER (*shaking his head and smiling at her; then holding out his hand, tenderly*). Come! (*She rises, goes to him and kneels beside him. He shrinks. David enters*) And you, David. (*The Boy goes to him, on the other side. A pause.*

He continues with emotion in his voice) Please — I cannot tell much — my heart is so — so full. (*Then in a gentle and grave whisper*) Fräulein Hesta — is it really true — you love my son?

THE GIRL (*holding up her head — and looking at him, tearfully*).

Oh, yes — please!

TOYMAKER (*turning to his son*). And you, David — you love this girl?

THE BOY. Yes, Father!

TOYMAKER (*to the Girl*). Are you frightened?

BOTH (*nodding*). Oh, yes — so much!

TOYMAKER. So was I! It is such a mystery — so silent! No one knows how or where it comes.

THE GIRL. Love is so wonderful, sir!

TOYMAKER (*nodding his head*). Yes, love is — but it will not go on by itself. Oh, my children, for this reason so many hearts have been broken. You cannot — you must not neglect love — it is a very fragile and delicate thing. We must keep him shining bright and alive in the home — or he will fly away — oh, so easily! And smile much. Oh, I believe so, in smiling much — keeps the doctors away. If sadness comes — and Fate seems hard — and she is often so! — put a smile on your face. (*Smiles*) Inside, you may feel more like weeping — but never mind — keep the smile so, and gradually — before you know — the smile has grown into your heart, and kindness comes; — then take a deep breath — presto! The sky is cleared and all comes right. All comes right!

THE GIRL (*entranced*). Oh, go on — go on!

TOYMAKER. You will find what I am saying is true — when you are married!

THE GIRL (*in terror*). Married!

[*Boy back a step.*]

TOYMAKER. Yes!

THE GIRL (*rises*). We never thought of that!

[*The Boy stands back, and they stare at one another in dread.*]

TOYMAKER (*gently*). Of course not! (*Regards them; — then*

emotion comes into his voice) Oh! (*Sighs*) Bless me — I felt that way over forty years ago!

[*Wipes his eyes.*]

THE GIRL. But marriage — why, it is such a serious thing, — sir!

THE BOY. Oh, yes!

THE GIRL. Do we have to get married?

THE BOY. Yes, Father — do *we*?

TOYMAKER (*smiling*). Gott in Himmel — don't you want to be together the rest of your lives?

BOTH. Oh, yes — please!

TOYMAKER. When people really are in love — mind you, really in love — they are married!

THE BOY. Oh!

THE GIRL. Oh!

TOYMAKER (*slowly*). Fräulein Hesta, your father is a rich man; he has given you much comfort and care! Do you realize that my David here — is a poor fellow?

THE GIRL. Yes, Herr Budel.

TOYMAKER. Do you realize, too, that his father here — is a poor fellow too?

THE GIRL. Yes, Herr Budel!

TOYMAKER. David will never be a rich man; he is too much like his father — a spendthrift! But he, too, will make toys — beautiful toys, and be a great artist. But listen, your lives will be full of hard work and hard pinches.

THE GIRL. Yes, Herr Budel!

TOYMAKER. No coaches — not many parties or picnics — not much play or such things. You don't care? It doesn't matter?

THE GIRL (*kneeling again beside the Toymaker, and taking David's hand across his knee*). No — it doesn't matter. I love him, sir!

TOYMAKER (*very moved*). Are you quite sure, Fräulein Hesta?

THE GIRL (*simply*). Oh, yes!

TOYMAKER (*A deep note coming into his voice as he puts his arms about the two. The Boy kneels, too*). Please — please come

closer. Now I bless you! (*The two lovers bow their heads; he holds them close to him and bows his head over them, shutting his eyes. His voice trembling with emotion*) Oh, God keep you always children, and let not your love grow up!
[Pats their heads. A pause. A knock. They all three rise and regard each other.]

THE GIRL (*terror-stricken*). I think it is my father, Herr Budel.

TOYMAKER. Good, — we tell him!

THE GIRL (*frightened*). Oh!

[Enter Lena in answer to the knock. Stares astonished at the two men.]

LENA. Herr Budel — David Budel — how did you get here
 TOYMAKER (*embarrassed*). Please — I! We!

THE GIRL. I let them in — Lena. Herr Budel has come to see my father on business.

LENA (*suspiciously*). I did not hear you come in!

[Knock again. Lena goes slowly to the door with a backward look of reproach and distrust at them. She opens the gate. Enter Herr Kronfeldt, frock-coated, smiling and well fed; — with that contentment about him — born of a good dinner and a good pipe, which he is smoking. It is a long meerschaum. Lena closes gate.]

KRONFELDT (*kindly*). Ah, friend Budel! Come to tell me you've changed your mind about those Teddy Bears, eh?

TOYMAKER (*bowing and smiling*). Please, sir, this is not business now — it is different!

KRONFELDT (*puzzled*). Different? (*Then hospitably*) Well, sit down first! Lena — bring some beer! (*Seeing David*) Ah, David!

[Sits. The Girl sits on bench.]

THE BOY (*bowing and smiling*). Herr Kronfeldt!

KRONFELDT (*Sitting contentedly at table. Waves Budel to a chair*) Sit down!

TOYMAKER (*seating himself nervously*). Thank you, sir!

[Enter Lena with two glasses of beer on tray. Hesta takes it and serves it. The lovers remain standing, tremblingly listening]

KRONFELDT (*pompously*). Well — friend Budel — what is this?

TOYMAKER. Sir, you know David here — you have known him since he was a little fellow, so high!

KRONFELDT. Yes! Have some beer, Budel?

TOYMAKER. Thank you!

KRONFELDT (*raising his glass*). Prosit!

TOYMAKER. Prosit, sir!

[*They drink in silence. Exit Lena.*]

KRONFELDT. Well!

TOYMAKER (*David bows*). You — you have always liked David — and been kind to him on Christmas and such times.

[*Puts glass back.*]

KRONFELDT (*Looks at David. Puzzled*). Yes — David and I have always been good friends, I hope.

THE BOY. Yes, sir!

TOYMAKER. Well, sir, David is a boy no longer.

KRONFELDT. So!

[*Looks below Toymaker at David. Girl moves to end of bench.*]

TOYMAKER. No, sir, he is a man!

KRONFELDT. Well?

TOYMAKER (*slowly*). Herr Kronfeldt — Love has come to my son!

KRONFELDT. Yes.

TOYMAKER. Yes, sir — and for Fräulein Hesta — your daughter!

[*Looks at Hesta; she rises.*]

KRONFELDT (*smiling*). Nonsense!

TOYMAKER. It is true — (*Kronfeldt turns back to Budel*) Herr Kronfeldt — and his love is returned by Fräulein Hesta.

KRONFELDT (*stopping smiling*). Stop — this is nonsense!

TOYMAKER (*proudly*). Look at them, sir!

[*Kronfeldt regards them both and then the Toymaker in a grave kind of wonder.*]

TOYMAKER (*rises*). Herr Kronfeldt — you have known me and mine all these years. I come and honourably ask you to allow my son to marry your daughter!

THE BOY (*with dignity, stepping forward*). Herr Kronfeldt, what my father is saying — indeed is true, sir! I love your daughter, sir — I will work hard for her, sir, — so hard, sir!

TOYMAKER. You see, sir!

KRONFELDT (*Smokes calmly. All three regard him with intensity. He speaks slowly and kindly*). Friend Budel — you are a child — you have always been a child in the ways of the world. I cannot find it in my heart to be angry with you!

TOYMAKER. You talk of anger, sir, — when two people love each other, sir!

KRONFELDT (*laughing*). My dear children — for you are nothing less, the three of you — this is all foolishness! David is a good fellow, Budel, and I have always liked him! I wouldn't mind him in the least for a son-in-law.

[*Hesta runs to embrace him; stops.*]

TOYMAKER (*pleased*). Ah!

KRONFELDT. But, my dear Budel, he has no knowledge of the world — and business; he doesn't even know the value of money!

TOYMAKER. Money? I was afraid of this, sir. Please — let us have no money here. This is sacred, sir!

KRONFELDT (*Rising and kindly. Moves to house*). Budel! Budel! You will always be a fool! (*Patting his shoulder*) But a good old fool!

[*Turns to go into the house.*]

TOYMAKER (*in agony*). But — Herr Kronfeldt — when do we get married?

KRONFELDT (*turning sharply, his eye blazing*). Married! (*At steps. A pause*). No, I will not lose my temper! Budel — I don't wish to hurt you nor your son! But all this talk of love and marriage is nonsense. If you had any money on your side of the contract, I might listen to you; but believe me, my friend, I know more of the world and its ways than you do, and I will not have my daughter marry a man who only paints eyelashes on dolls!

TOYMAKER. But you don't understand; — *love* is here, sir!

[*Points to the lovers.*]

KRONFELDT (*on steps*). Do you think I want my daughter to marry into poverty, and slave all the rest of her life? I can't see how you have never learned some sense, Budel. God knows you've had a hard enough time of it, making both ends meet; and yet, here you are, cheerfully asking me to let my daughter enter into a life like yours. Do you want these two to suffer and grind as much as you and Frau Budel have?

TOYMAKER. Suffered — I suffer! My life has been a beautiful one, sir!

KRONFELDT. Budel, I don't want to hurt; I'd be the last man to want to hurt you — as I like and trust you! But can't you see you come to me with an idea I cannot grasp? Listen, I refuse to give my daughter to your son — unless he can come to me with at least 5000 marks to start life with!

TOYMAKER. Money — money — all money-talk! Sir, it is blinding your eyes. God has blessed us here, and you talk of money. I plead, sir, for these two young people!

KRONFELDT. No! No! Our points of view are different.

TOYMAKER. They can never be poor with what they have!

KRONFELDT (*going towards the house, laughing*). All right! All right! Have it your own way, then — have it your own way! But I must refuse the honour. However, I'll show you I have no ill-feeling towards you, and that I trust my Hesta — your son — and yourself. I'll leave you here alone together to say farewell! (*Steps to door*) Good-night!

TOYMAKER (*Pleadingly. Crosses to steps*). Sir — oh, sir!

KRONFELDT. Good-night!

[*Goes into the house, shutting the door. A long pause as Budel, back to audience, stares at the closed door. He then turns slowly and regards the two frightened lovers. He beckons them both with either hand; they come slowly to him, on either side. Then all three stand in front of table. He pats their hands tremblingly.*]

TOYMAKER (*taking a deep breath*). Per — perhaps we smile, eh? (*They all try to, but fail. A pause*) It's difficult sometimes — but try hard — all will come right!

THE BOY. Father, Herr Kronfeldt is right! I am too poor to marry Hesta! I must go out into the world and make my fortune! I'll go, as my brother, Adolf, did to America!

TOYMAKER (*tragically, in a low voice*). Oh, no! Oh, no! Not that, David, not that!

THE GIRL. Oh, please, must one always have money to marry with?

TOYMAKER. Of course not.

THE GIRL. What shall we do?

THE BOY. I tell you, Father — Herr Kronfeldt is right. I'll go to America to-morrow — make a fortune and come back to you, Hesta.

THE GIRL (*wistfully*). Can't you make a fortune here in Nuremberg?

TOYMAKER. No — not so sudden!

THE GIRL (*weeping*). It does seem so cruel!

THE BOY. Yes, Father, it is cruel — isn't it?

TOYMAKER. I tell you — we smile — eh?

[*Beckons them both to him.*]

THE BOY. What are we to do now, Father?

THE GIRL. Yes — Herr Budel — what are we to do? But please, don't let your son go to America, sir.

THE BOY. But I must, Hesta; there is no way else to win you!

TOYMAKER. Come — we — think.

[*The three all sit on the bench, side by side and close together, and think hard. Some students are heard singing softly in the distance. Birds twitter overhead, and a bell rings the hour. Then a rattle and a bang of horses' hoofs are heard outside the gate. The three rise and listen in terror, clutching hold of each other. The noise becomes fearful — clattering of hoofs, jingling of harness, and rumble of wheels. The Boy runs and opens gate. In bursts Paul, the old Sergeant, the old Poet, and a coachman, all panting and talking at once.*]

PAUL (*mad with suppressed excitement*). David! David!

SERGEANT. Halt! I am general here! (*He hobbles up to Budel and salutes*) Is this coast clear?

TOYMAKER (*dazed*). Coast? What is this, Strumpf?

SERGEANT (*cross with excitement*). Answer me — is Kronfeldt in the house?

TOYMAKER. Yes — but ——!

SERGEANT (*hobbles up to the lovers, panting*). Here, you two people. You are in love! (*An embarrassed pause*) Answer!

THE BOY. Yes, sir.

SERGEANT. And the old fool in there (*points to house*) has refused his consent?

THE BOY. Unless I have money!

SERGEANT. Well, you haven't any, have you?

THE BOY. Alas — no, sir!

TOYMAKER. But — Sergeant ——

SERGEANT (*crossly*). Shut up, Abraham! Listen, you two — (*Lena at window with candle*) — do you really want to get married?

BOTH. Yes, please!

SERGEANT (*weeping in his excitement*). Good! Well then!

We have a coach and a horse here! — and get inside ——

BOY AND GIRL. Coach!

SERGEANT. God bless you!

ALL. What!

SERGEANT. We'll all get in — drive to St. Martins — marry you — and send you off to a quiet place I know of.

THE BOY (*joy coming into his voice*). You mean for us to elope, sir — run away?

SERGEANT (*quite overcome with emotion and excitement*). Yes, sir — elope, sir — the coach is paid for — and here is enough money to last you till Kronfeldt's anger cools down! God — God bless you, my boy and girl!

[*Goes up stage; so does Paul.*]

POET (*Weeping outright. Goes up*). God bless you ——!

[*Lena gives gasps all through this conversation; now listens, breathing hard with rage.*]

THE BOY. Oh, sir — Hesta — this is wonderful — will you?

THE GIRL. Oh — my father — I couldn't!

SERGEANT (*sharply*). Do you love him?

[*Bangs David in the chest.*]

THE GIRL. Oh, yes, sir!

SERGEANT. Do you want to marry him?

THE GIRL. Yes, please — but my father!

SERGEANT. Father be damned!

THE GIRL. Oh!

[Shocked.]

SERGEANT. You're not going to marry your father — are you?

THE GIRL. No, sir!

SERGEANT. Come, let us go before we are discovered!

[Poet, Paul, and Coachman up. Sergeant, Boy, and Girl start up, round the table. Lena gives a cry, shuts the window and is heard running downstairs, within the house.]

TOYMAKER. Stop!!

[All stop, astonished, and stare at him.]

SERGEANT *(fiercely, his blood roused)*. What the devil ——!

TOYMAKER. I forbid this! He has trusted us here together; he has trusted his daughter to my keeping. I forbid this!

[He goes up on a line with Sergeant.]

SERGEANT. Now this has got nothing to do with you, Abraham! This is my affair!

TOYMAKER. No, it can't be! It is not honourable to Kronfeldt.

SERGEANT *(dismayed)*. But I thought you would like this — Budel — it's so — so romantic!

POET *(from his place)*. It's a fine coach.

COACHMAN *(from his place, gruffly)*. Yes, sir — and it's been used for eloping couples these twenty years!

SERGEANT. Won't you change your mind, Abraham?

TOYMAKER. No — it is wrong!

[Screams are heard within the house, and Kronfeldt's roaring voice; — then the door bursts open. In rushes Lena and Kronfeldt, both panting, roaring and infuriated. Sergeant retires behind table and joins Poet, who comes down. David and Girl cross to back of couch.]

LENA. Here they are, sir — see the coach — and all!

KRONFELDT *(halting abruptly with a roar, on steps, Lena beside him)*. So! *(Exeunt Paul and Coachman. To his daughter)*

Come here! (*Lena exits. She goes to him*) So that is how you are to be trusted, Herr Abraham Budel! You come into my house, like a snake, and rob me, like a thief, of my daughter.

ALL (*except Budel*). Sir, — it was our fault — not his.

KRONFELDT (*roaring*). Silence!

THE GIRL. It was not his fault, Father!

KRONFELDT (*roaring*). Silence!

[*Clutches her wrist tighter!*]

THE GIRL. Oh, Father, you hurt me!

[*The Boy runs to her.*]

KRONFELDT. Stand off — (*The Boy retires*) I'll have you all arrested. No, I won't! I know what I'll do! Herr Budel, I trusted you — now — now — I see you are a villain! Now I understand your motives — because I was going to cut your wages for not making Teddy Bears — you try to have your son to marry into my family for my money, eh? — to save yourself! Ah! and you acted so innocent all the time — and I believed you. You double-face! You liar! You sneak-thief! You child-robber! I don't want your dolls and toys any more! Get out of my place! (*Back on steps*) I can get plenty of people to make Teddy Bears for me; you are not the only one! Go!! I discharge you from my employ. Get out of my place! (*All gasp. To his daughter*) Come, you! I have something to say to you — my lady — inside!

[*Drags her roughly into the house, and slams the door to with a bang. The little Toymaker has been standing with his back to audience, and staring up at Kronfeldt — enquiringly. A long silence. Slowly turns front with an ashy face. The Sergeant and Poet come, with bowed heads, on either side of him.*]

SERGEANT (*brokenly*). It was all our fault!

POET (*weeping openly*). Please — oh, friend!

TOYMAKER (*Stares at both of them, his lips trying to work. He takes their two hands and helplessly pats them. He speaks with trembling lips, trying to smile*) Co — come — per — perhaps — we — we — smile!

ACT III

At the Toymaker's again. Ten days later. The act begins with late afternoon.

The curtain rises on Frau Budel, on her knees, packing a huge trunk — a gaudy affair. She packs for a while and then bursts into tears, and covers her face with the Toymaker's coat which she is packing. A knock is heard.

FRAU BUDEL (*wiping her eyes on the coat and continuing her packing*). Co — come in! (*Enter a young Clerk, with fat cheeks and spectacles; he keeps hat on*) Who are you?

THE CLERK (*opening a large book*). I'm from the auctioneers, Frau Budel. I've come to make the inventory!

[*Looks about the room.*]

FRAU BUDEL (*rising*). Oh, please wait, sir — come back in an hour's time!

THE CLERK (*looking at his watch, and at the great clock without*).

But the appointment was for five o'clock, Madam!

FRAU BUDEL. I know — but — my husband — you know he leaves — he leaves here to-day forever — he goes to America! He — he wants to see this room as it has always been — to say good-bye to it — so! Instead of leaving it when it is all bare!

THE CLERK (*bowing a great deal, — kindly*). Oh, certainly, Madam — we will return later — in an hour's time! Pardon — I understand you do not go with your husband — Frau Budel — and that the proceeds of the auction are to go to you?

FRAU BUDEL (*tearfully*). Yes — my husband and my son — are going to America for a little while — to make a fortune!

THE CLERK. In what business, may I ask — Frau Budel?

FRAU BUDEL. They don't quite know, but we read in a paper that a great deal of money can be made in the West of America, with cattle raising!

THE CLERK. Yes?

FRAU BUDEL. Yes! This man in the paper says, if you send him five marks in postage stamps, he will show you how to make a fortune in a year!

THE CLERK. America is a wonderful place! (*Bowing*) We will return later, Frau Budel!

FRAU BUDEL. Thank you!

[*Exeunt Clerk and Assistant. A pause as she goes on packing. Enter the Boy, gay and excited.*]

THE BOY. Hurry, Mother, hurry, or we'll never be in time!

FRAU BUDEL (*tearfully*). Yes — I'm hurrying — David!

THE BOY. Don't cry, Mother — please! Come, let me help you pack — so!

[*Picks up a great bunch of clothes and throws them into the trunk.*]

FRAU BUDEL. Oh — stop! No! That is not packing — that is stuffing! Here — this is the way — so!

[*Packs carefully again. The Boy watches her pack for some moments, then reaches out and catches her hand.*]

THE BOY. Oh, Mother, dear (*she rises, with waistcoat in her hand*), you will be kind and watch over her when we are away?

FRAU BUDEL. Oh, yes — my boy — my David — we will pray much together for you! I don't know what your father will do — he has never been one whole day away from me, since we have been married — he is quite helpless, without me!

THE BOY (*cheerfully*). Never fear, I'll look after him, Mother!

FRAU BUDEL. Yes — but he is so absent-minded, and the outside world always makes him nervous and afraid! You know how he always lives in this room — it is his world! Outside, it is so big and noisy and cruel! Dear me, you both are such children! — such babies!

THE BOY. But I am a man now, Mother! We'll make a fortune in six months — perhaps three. And the first thing I do with my money is to buy you a black silk dress, my Mother. [*Embrace.*]

FRAU BUDEL (*clings to him*). My boy — my boy! — Adolph left me; it seems hard that you must be taken from me, too!

TOYMAKER (*voice from room*). Emma!

FRAU BUDEL (*drying her eyes*). Yes, Abraham!

TOYMAKER (*voice*). Come, Emma, let us have a last look together, and see if we've forgotten anything!

FRAU BUDEL. I'm coming! (*Going to the door, weeping*) David — it will kill him! He — he never rode a horse in his life!

THE BOY. Never fear, Mother, I won't let him ride — I'll do it all myself!

FRAU BUDEL. Oh, I hope it's true that you can make a fortune in a year!

THE BOY. The man in the paper says so! Everyone says so!

Look at Herr Erkhardt — and lots of people who have done it!

FRAU BUDEL. But cattle are so dangerous, David!

THE BOY. Well — perhaps it won't be cattle! We'll find my brother Adolph, first, — he'll know what is best!

FRAU BUDEL (*going out*). Oh, it is hard — it is hard!

[*Exit Frau Budel. The Boy is left alone a moment; he closes trunk, and moves up stage. A knock is heard and Paul bursts in.*]

PAUL (*in a wild whisper*). David! David! [*On steps.*]

THE BOY. What is it, Paul?

PAUL (*breathlessly*). Are you alone?

THE BOY. Yes.

PAUL (*coming in a little*). I have brought someone to see you — no one knows!

THE BOY. What!

PAUL (*delightedly, opens door*). Fräulein Hesta!

THE BOY. Hesta! (*Crosses to Paul*) Oh, where is she? Where is she?

PAUL (*running to the door and flinging it wide open*). Here! (*Enter the Girl on a run, and flies into the Boy's arms*) I'll keep watch on the stairs — you mustn't be long — Herr Kronfeldt gets back at six!

[*Exit, closing door.*]

THE BOY (*brokenly*). Oh, my Hesta! — oh, my Hesta!

THE GIRL. David — oh, David! I told my father it was not your father's fault — the elopement — but he wouldn't listen;

he said your father has deceived everyone and shaken his faith in mankind!

THE BOY. Yes — Herr Kronfeldt returned my father's letter unopened, and refused to see either Sergeant Strumpf or Stauffenbach. Never mind, it was all for the best.

THE GIRL. Oh, I can't let you go, David! It was all my fault! I can't bear it that it is my father who should be the one to do this cruel thing!

THE BOY. Hesta — your father was right! He has made a man of me! He is right! I will become a strong, strong man, and do big things now. No more am I a boy — no longer do I paint eyelashes on dolls! I am a man now!

[*Lets go of her.*]

THE GIRL. Oh, I don't want you to be a man, David, — I want you to be — (*turns to him*) in Nuremberg!

THE BOY (*tenderly*). Hesta — my Hesta — promise you won't forget me —

THE GIRL. David —

THE BOY. I love you —

THE GIRL. I love you!

THE BOY (*taking out divers pieces of the flute, and putting them together*). See — my old flute! I am going to give it to you to keep till I come back!

THE GIRL. Oh, no — you must take it with you — to keep your heart gay!

THE BOY (*sadly*). No, it must be silent now. It has always been used to wake the love in your heart! I could not play it to strangers now! Oh, no! Keep it, my Hesta — and when you see it — you will remember — my heart was on my lips when I played!

[*Gives it to her.*]

THE GIRL (*holding up a little book*). I brought this — this book — for you, — David!

THE BOY. A prayer-book!

THE GIRL. Yes, and inside — see — a rose is pressed! — I've so often thrown one of those to you — my David!

[*They embrace, with emotion. Chimes strike once, 5.30 P. M.*]

THE BOY. Half-past five — you must go!

[*Enter Paul.*]

PAUL. Time's up — Fräulein Hesta!

THE GIRL (*holding David in her arms*). Ah no! — (*Embrace*)

Good-bye! Good-bye!

THE BOY (*holding her close to him*). I love you! Look up!

Look up! The sun is shining in my heart! I'm a man now!

I'm going to win you — my Hesta!

THE GIRL. Good-bye! Good-bye!

THE BOY (*brokenly*). Good-bye! Good-bye!

THE GIRL (*taking the flute in both her hands, and holding her head far back to keep back the tears*). No — you must not see me last — crying. I will be smiling? — so!

[*Tries to smile, and then, with a moaning cry, turns and runs out, sobbing.*]

THE BOY. Hesta!

[*Rushes after her.*]

PAUL (*standing in front of the Boy*). Stop! Don't make it harder for her, David!

THE BOY (*gasping*). All right — quick — go! Take her home!

[*Exit Paul. The Boy walks up to table, struggling with his emotion, which he masters with difficulty. He ends up, sitting at his father's little work-table, and holding his head in his hands; he sways from side to side. Enter the Toymaker, carrying the dog in both arms. He regards his son in his attitude of despair.*]

TOYMAKER (*worried*). David — what is this?

THE BOY (*rising, and looking at door*). I have just said good-bye to my love lady!

TOYMAKER (*amazed*). She was here ——

THE BOY. Yes, sir — she's just gone!

TOYMAKER. It was good of her to come! (*Going over to the Boy*)

My David — (*looks up into the Boy's face*) we'll win her, eh?

THE BOY (*holds on to his father*). Oh, yes, sir — bless you, sir!

TOYMAKER. We'll make a fortune — eh, David?

THE BOY (*begins to smile*). Oh, yes, Father!

TOYMAKER (*wistfully*). You think so?

THE BOY (*enthusiastically*). Of course — Father!

TOYMAKER. And Nebuchadnezzar? (*Holds up the dog*) We take him?

THE BOY. Oh, yes — Father — we'll take the dog! He can help us with the cattle — and keep the burglars off!

TOYMAKER (*shily*). Burglars ——!

THE BOY. Yes, Father!

TOYMAKER (*looking at the dog*). He is not much acquainted with burglars, David!

THE BOY. Oh, Father, won't it be wonderful to go out into the world — so great and big — and fight our way through!

TOYMAKER (*nodding timidly*). Yes — David!

THE BOY. We'll show them — *we'll* show them, — eh, Father?

TOYMAKER (*not understanding, but agreeing*). Yes — David!

THE BOY. Paint eyelashes on dolls — pah! — that's child work to what I'm going to do now — to the life we're going to lead — to the men we're going to become! No more toys now, Father — we are going to do bigger things!

TOYMAKER. Yes, David!

THE BOY (*excitedly, coming back*). Oh, it's glorious, Father, glorious — what love can do for a man! I feel I could move the world — lift this house!

TOYMAKER (*timidly*). Please ——

THE BOY (*pausing*). Yes, Father ——

TOYMAKER. You'll let me make a doll now and then!

THE BOY. Of course, Father — if you want to — but you'll never want to again ——

TOYMAKER. You think so?

THE BOY. Of course, Father; toys are children's things. We'll be men, Father — big men!

TOYMAKER. Oh!

[*Enter Frau Budel. She halts and regards them. They look at her anxiously.*

FRAU BUDEL (*in a hard, dry voice*). No — don't be afraid — I'm not going to cry. Is — is everything ready?

[*Boy takes dog, goes behind Emma, and puts him off. Comes back and sits on arm of chair.*

TOYMAKER. Yes — Emma. Except our personal luggage — up-stairs!

FRAU BUDEL. Personal luggage?

TOYMAKER. Yes — some things — some private things — Emma. (*An embarrassed pause, as all three look on the ground*) Emma — Strumpf and Stauffenbach will look after you when — when I am gone!

FRAU BUDEL (*trying to hold back her tears*). Ye — es!

TOYMAKER. I have left for you the little money I have saved, and with the auction of these — (*looks yearningly around the room*) these things — you will be all right for a year — when we come back — rich!

FRAU BUDEL. Yes!

TOYMAKER. You will — take care of yourself — Emma?

FRAU BUDEL. Ye — es!

TOYMAKER. You — you won't be lonesome?

FRAU BUDEL (*weakly*). Oh, no!

TOYMAKER (*going up to his wife, taking her hands in his and holding them, — his lips trembling*). Emma!

FRAU BUDEL (*trembling — on the verge of tears — clinging to his hands*). My boy — my boy!

[*They cling to each other, and look into each other's eyes.*]

TOYMAKER. It is — for the best — Emma!

[*They both nod to each other.*]

THE BOY. Stop that — Father — Mother — you mustn't!

TOYMAKER. Emma!

FRAU BUDEL. Abraham!

[*Voices without. A military knock is heard on the door. The two old people still cling to each other, looking into each other's eyes. The Boy opens the door, and in walks the old Sergeant and the Poet.*]

SERGEANT. Abraham!

TOYMAKER (*still clinging to his wife's hands*). Old friends!

SERGEANT (*excitedly*). There's a big crowd waiting at the station for you — to say good-bye!

TOYMAKER (*in terror*). Good-bye?

POET. Yes, Abraham, it's a big crowd — mostly children!

Why, I never thought you knew so many children!

TOYMAKER (*with trembling voice, clinging closer to his wife*).

Emma — I am scared!

FRAU BUDEL. Oh, my boy!

TOYMAKER (*choking*). I could not leave you, Emma. Oh no —

I cannot leave you — you are helpless without me! She is helpless without me!

FRAU BUDEL. No, Abraham, I am brave — see!

[*Tries to hold her head up and cannot. They cling to each other.*]

THE BOY (*comes behind them, and then between them*). Father — Mother — you mustn't!

TOYMAKER. But she is such a child — I have never left her a day — she is helpless! She is such a child!

FRAU BUDEL. Be brave — Abraham —

THE BOY. Yes, Father — it's nearly time to go!

TOYMAKER (*trying to command himself*). Please — I am scared!

It is hard to be brave! I would make a bad soldier — eh — Strumpf? (*The Sergeant shakes his head*) Come here — you two bad fellows! (*His two old friends come up to him. The Toymaker reaches in his coat, and brings out an old watch and a bunch of medals*) Here, Stauffenbach, — here is the Schiller watch — and you, Strumpf — your medals — I pin them on, so! (*The Sergeant stands and salutes, as the Toymaker pins the medals on*) You have doubly won these honours — Sergeant Strumpf! What you did for your old friend last week — was the bravest and noblest deed of your life! Bless you!

SERGEANT (*brokenly*). We can't let you go to America alone; we must come with you!

POET. Yes — please let us come too!

TOYMAKER. No — please — you stay and care for my Emma here! David and I will go out into the world — alone!

THE BOY. Yes, Father!

SERGEANT. Well — if I can't go — I want you to take this to defend yourself against dangers. (*Draws out from his coat tails an enormous campaign revolver*) Here is my campaign revolver! Take it — you will need it in America. [*Forces it on him.*]

TOYMAKER (*taking it gingerly in both hands*). Thank you — Strumpf!

SERGEANT. Take care — it is loaded!

TOYMAKER (*laying it at once carefully with both hands on the floor*). Thank you, Strumpf — that was thoughtful of you! Please unfix it!

SERGEANT. Unfix it?

TOYMAKER. Yes — take out the loads!

SERGEANT. Oh! (*Picks up the pistol and goes to table with Poet*) There!

TOYMAKER (*smiling*). Thank you!

[*Knock at door. Clerk enters. Sergeant sits on bench, Poet at table, Frau Budel on trunk.*]

CLERK (*out of breath*). Beg pardon — Herr Budel —

TOYMAKER. Yes! Yes!

CLERK. I have bought your tickets, Herr Budel —

TOYMAKER. Yes! Yes!

CLERK. But the dog!

[*The Boy runs off and gets dog.*]

TOYMAKER. The dog — well — sir!

CLERK. When I brought your tickets you did not say anything about taking the dog.

TOYMAKER. Well, sir?

CLERK. It costs quite a lot to take a dog to America.

TOYMAKER. How much?

CLERK. About one hundred marks!

TOYMAKER. One hundred marks — No — please — I can't — no — are you sure?

CLERK. Oh, yes! —

TOYMAKER. But Nebuchadnezzar here — surely it would be different for him?

CLERK. No — Herr Budel — he is a dog and has to pay the dog rate.

TOYMAKER. Please, you are sure, sir? Well, you take him, eh? — You take him to Fräulein Hesta Kronfeldt — to keep till we come back? (*Taking Clerk aside*) Please don't tell the dog we are gone till to-morrow — eh?

CLERK. No, sir!

TOYMAKER. Now take him away — (*Exit Clerk*) I'll not look. Is he gone? I go — now — up-stairs — (*Poet gives him the pistol*) Strumpf — Stauffenbach — help me — (*They cross to door*) I'll get my personal luggage — we go. Come, David!

[*The three go out, leaving the Toymaker alone with his wife. He stands staring at her; holds out his arms to her at door. Emma!*]

FRAU BUDEL (*running to him and embracing him*). Abraham!

TOYMAKER (*holding her for a moment*). All will come right, Emma — all will come right!

[*She nods her head, speechless with grief, trying to smile; he turns and goes out of the room smiling at her. She then creeps over to the Toymaker's little work-table and, with infinite yearning and tenderness, kneels down and, putting her arms across the table, lays her head down on them and cries silently — her heart broken. A pause. Feet and voices are heard on the stairs without. Then a knock at door. Frau Budel hears nothing, but weeps despairingly. The knock is heard again, and then the door is opened, and in bursts Adolph Budel — an enormous, six-foot, fair-haired lad of the commercial-traveller type — of Kansas City — who belongs to the Elks, and wears a shark's tooth on his watch-chain. He is dressed in a brown business coat, dark grey trousers, immaculate white waistcoat, a white automobile coat, hat, gauntlets and goggles. With him is his chauffeur, Tom Macey, a typical New Yorker, dressed in black leather uniform. Frau Budel sees and hears nothing.*]

CHAUFFEUR. This is the place, sir!

ADOLPH (*in a whisper — seeing his mother*). Wait outside, Tom — till I call you! (*Puts coat over rail. Exit Macey. Adolph stands still some moments, looking tenderly at his mother, pulling off his gloves at last. He then goes slowly towards her. Comes round to her. Tenderly*) Frau Budel!

FRAU BUDEL (*without raising her head — with a moaning sob*). Yes!

ADOLPH (*putting a hand quietly on her*). Mother —!

FRAU BUDEL (*sits slowly up, staring at him through her tears, tremblingly*). Sir — who are you?

ADOLPH (*Raising her. In a low voice*). Mother — it is me — your son!

FRAU BUDEL (*vaguely staring at him*). My — my son?

ADOLPH (*brokenly*). Yes — your boy — Mother — your Adolph!

FRAU BUDEL. Adolph!

[*Stares at him.*]

ADOLPH (*coming nearer to her on his knees, and putting his arms tenderly around her*). Yes — I am your boy — Mother — your boy!

FRAU BUDEL (*sobbing and pressing the big man close to her heart*). Adolph! Oh, my Adolph! (*They hold each other tight for a while, without a word*) You've come back! You've come back! Oh, my boy! My little boy! My baby! (*Rocks to and fro with him, sobbing*) My heart has starved for you. My heart has starved for you! My heart has starved for you! Oh! Oh!

ADOLPH (*choking*). I am here — Mother — I am here!

FRAU BUDEL. Adolph — Adolph! My Adolph!

ADOLPH. Mother — I didn't know you were so pretty — how young and pretty you are — for such a big fellow like me!

FRAU BUDEL. Oh, why didn't you write?

ADOLPH. Oh — I cannot write letters! I don't know what to say! I can't write to those I love.

FRAU BUDEL (*realizing it is her son*). Adolph! — Adolph! Where did you come from? How did you come?

ADOLPH. I came down from Berlin in my bubble.

FRAU BUDEL (*puzzled*). Bubble?

ADOLPH. Yes — automobile — motor-car!

FRAU BUDEL. What is this — my boy — you have an automobile?

ADOLPH. Yes, Mother — yes — it's a six cylinder, and it's a beauty on the up-grades!

FRAU BUDEL. But, Adolph, my son — only princes and such people have such things!

ADOLPH (*rising*). That's it, Mother — that's it!

FRAU BUDEL (*still dazed*). That's it?

ADOLPH. Mother — look at me — look at me — I'm rich!

FRAU BUDEL. Rich?

ADOLPH (*excitedly*). Yes — American rich — really — gorgeously — rollingly, magnificently rich!

FRAU BUDEL (*in awe*). My Adolph!

ADOLPH (*laughing*). That's it — I never wrote — because I was working hard — heart-breakingly hard — praying all the time that when I made my fortune — I'd come home and buy out the town (*with a sob*) for you! Well, I only made my pile last year — by the merest stroke of luck!

FRAU BUDEL. Luck?

ADOLPH. Yes, luck! I was in Kansas City — doing drummer-work for suspenders — patent suspenders — when I saw Bears — Teddy Bears — you know — these things — these Toy Bears!

FRAU BUDEL. Yes — yes!

ADOLPH. Well, I bought out McCleary's shop — joined forces — and scooped the market of Teddy Bears!

FRAU BUDEL (*dazed*). Scooped?

ADOLPH. Yes, Mother — I cornered Teddy Bears — and, Mother — Mother, they sold like hot-cakes! The children dropped their dolls, and grabbed up the bears! Lord, how the money rolled in! Mother, I am rich — gorgeously, magnumpiously — rich! I'm called the "Teddy Bear King."

FRAU BUDEL (*in horror*). The Teddy Bear King!

ADOLPH. Yes — here's one. (*Takes out a little white Teddy Bear from his pocket*) See, I always carry one.

FRAU BUDEL. But — my son — you don't know —

[*A knock and in comes the auctioneer's Clerk.*]

CLERK. It is near six o'clock, Frau Budel.

ADOLPH. Who is this, Mother?

FRAU BUDEL. The Auctioneer — Adolph!

ADOLPH. *What!* Auctioneer! Why? What for?

FRAU BUDEL. Oh, Adolph — Kronfeldt has turned us out — wouldn't give your father work because he wouldn't make Teddy Bears! Your Teddy Bears!

ADOLPH (*astounded*). What!

FRAU BUDEL. And David — your brother — is in love with Fräulein Hesta — and Kronfeldt thinks your father is a villain, and wanted to marry into his family for the money!

ADOLPH. Kronfeldt thinks that, does he?

FRAU BUDEL (*weeping*). Yes — so your father — and David — are going to America — to start a ranch!

[*Enter Paul on the run.*]

PAUL. David — David —

[*Sees Adolph; turns to go.*]

ADOLPH. Here — you — what's your name?

PAUL. Paul, sir!

ADOLPH. Tom!

TOM. Yes, sir!

[*Enter Chauffeur.*]

ADOLPH (*scribbles with a pencil on a card*). Here, Paul — get into my bubble and show Tom here — the quickest way to Herr Kronfeldt's, and bring Fräulein Hesta and her father here as quickly as you can —

FRAU BUDEL. But he won't come, Adolph! We've tried to write him — ourselves!

ADOLPH. Won't come — won't he? Wait till he reads this! I'm *his* boss — Mother! — what I say goes with Kronfeldt! — I'm the "Teddy Bear King"! And if he doesn't get here inside of twenty minutes — Tom Macey — I'll make you and him look like the middle of last July! Quick, both of you!

[*Gives card to Paul. Exeunt Paul and Chauffeur.*]

PAUL (*as he goes out, in awe*). The Teddy Bear King!

ADOLPH (*to Auctioneer*). The auction is off! I'll pay you for your trouble.

CLERK. Oh, thank you, sir!

[*Exits.*]

ADOLPH. Who owns this house — who's the actual landlord?

FRAU BUDEL. Herr Shultz!

ADOLPH. It's ours! We'll buy the place! God — I never had

the chance to do what I wanted with my money — (*With a catch in his voice*) Mother, I've dreamt of doing this — Mother, I've dreamt of this! Mother — you say my brother David — can't get married because he's too poor?

FRAU BUDEL. Yes — he paints the eyelashes on the dolls!

ADOLPH. I'll settle that — fifty thousand marks for a wedding present! I'll make old Kronfeldt change his mind!

FRAU BUDEL. Adolph — you mean — your father — David — won't be taken away from me?

ADOLPH. Taken away from you? (*Embraces her*) I'd like to see the man who'd dare to! No! I'll buy this house forever — for the whole damn family, and we'll never go away, and live forever here — together!

FRAU BUDEL (*weeping*). Oh! But wait — your father — he mustn't see you at first — it would be too much for him! He's coming down-stairs now!

ADOLPH. What shall I do?

FRAU BUDEL (*pushing him out*). Hide outside the front door — till he is in a proper state to tell him!

ADOLPH. All right! (*Kisses his mother*) Isn't it great — Mother! Aren't you proud of your boy, eh?

FRAU BUDEL. Oh, so much!

ADOLPH. And I made it by the merest chance — Mother!

FRAU BUDEL. Yes — yes — Now wait here till I call you!

[*Pushes him out door and shuts it, breathing hard. The Toymaker enters, carrying with difficulty a bird-cage, a large vase, a doll, his dog under his arm, and the Sergeant's huge revolver.*]

FRAU BUDEL. What are those things — Abraham?

TOYMAKER. My — my personal luggage!

[*Enter the Sergeant and the Poet, carrying more toys and bric-à-brac.*]

TOYMAKER (*weakly*). Emma!

FRAU BUDEL. Yes, Abraham?

TOYMAKER. I say good-bye — now.

FRAU BUDEL. Yes — Abraham — but?

TOYMAKER. Wait — I say good-bye to the room first.

ALL. Yes.

TOYMAKER. Now I say good-bye — quick! (*Goes to the middle of the room, holding his vase, doll, pistol, and bird-cage, — and stares yearningly all round*) Good-bye, old room! (*Stands still a moment, then runs to his wife*) Good-bye, Emma!

FRAU BUDEL. Wait, Abraham —

TOYMAKER (*running to the door*). No — no — I can't — I must be quick! — Good-bye — good-bye!

[*Opens the door, disclosing Adolph, and behind him Herr Kronfeldt, smiling, — Hesta, Paul and Chauffeur. The Toymaker halts and stares at them, looking up at the big stranger. A long pause. Adolph is very moved.*]

ADOLPH (*brokenly*). It was cruel.

TOYMAKER. Yes, sir.

ADOLPH. Don't you know me?

TOYMAKER (*dazed*). No, sir!

ADOLPH. I'm your son.

TOYMAKER (*nodding his head*). Yes, sir?

ADOLPH. Father — I'm your boy, come back to you. Come back — rich! I've made a fortune! I'm the "Teddy Bear King!"

TOYMAKER. The Teddy Bear King?

ADOLPH (*holding out his arms*). Father — Father — I'm your boy, Adolph!

TOYMAKER (*stares at him a long while; then with a little cry drops everything in his arms*). Adolph! — my Adolph!

[*They embrace. Everyone is moved.*]

SERGEANT (*taking out a handkerchief, brokenly*). Gott in Himmel!

TOYMAKER (*Clings to Adolph, dazed and astonished. Turns to Emma*). He is here, Emma. He is here — our firstborn!

FRAU BUDEL. Yes, I know — I know!

ADOLPH. Father, it's all right! Everything's all right! You won't have to go to America now. As for David and Fräulein Hesta — here she is — it's all settled.

KRONFELDT (*smiling and bowing*). It's all right, Budel. It's all right, now.

ADOLPH. It's all settled, Father! — Where is David?

TOYMAKER (*Still clinging to his son, motions feebly. Looks up yearningly into his face*). We — we don't go?

ADOLPH. No — Father — here you stay.

TOYMAKER (*Turns and gives a long and wistful look about the room, still clinging to the lapel of his son's coat. Then he again looks yearningly up at his son, like a child*). Please, I — I can stay?

ADOLPH (*nods*). Yes.

TOYMAKER. Oh!

[*Sighs.*]

ADOLPH (*brokenly*). Yes, Father. Why, I could buy the whole square if you wanted it! It's yours and always will be yours forever!

TOYMAKER (*looks around room as before*). I — I can stay?

ADOLPH (*nods*). Yes.

TOYMAKER (*sighs*). Oh!

ADOLPH. Oh, my God, yes! — Daddy — forever — forever! I'm here to care for you now — to protect you — Daddy! Daddy! *You can stay!*

TOYMAKER (*stares up at his son; then a startled look*). And David! Dave! — Oh, oh, come! (*Beckons Hesta with both hands*) C — come. (*Kronfeldt disengages her. She comes quickly to him*) Da — (*Weakly*) David.

[*Leads her tremblingly to door, and tries to call. All watch him.*]

THE BOY (*off stage*). Yes, Father!

TOYMAKER. Come!

[*Enter the Boy, carrying his arms full of books.*]

THE BOY. Yes, Father. (*Sees Hesta; lets books fall with a crash*) Hesta!

TOYMAKER. David, it has come. It is the Teddy Bear.

THE BOY. What are you saying, Father?

TOYMAKER. The Teddy Bear. He is rich. He has come. He is my son. He is Adolph.

DAVID. Adolph!

TOYMAKER. Yes, he is rich. I told you. He gives you your love lady. So!

[*Joins hands of Boy and Girl.*]

DAVID. You mean? —

TOYMAKER. Yes. (*Turns his back on the lovers and waves to the others*) We — we not look.

DAVID (*with sob, embraces Hesta*). My Hesta!

THE GIRL. David!

TOYMAKER (*His back to lovers. Smiles through tears; his voice breaks for the first time; simply*). I — I — think I thank God.

CURTAIN

END OF PLAY

ABOUT SIX WHO PASS WHILE THE LENTILS BOIL

Who has ever heard of a theater in a portmanteau? Just as well get a camel through the eye of a needle, or make a thimble out of a tea-cup. Well, it's true, nevertheless, and Mr. Stuart Walker, a young man interested in the theater, has done it. When he was a boy, he used to amuse himself with a toy theater. Older men than he — Gilbert Chesterton, for instance — have amused themselves with miniature playhouses, complete in every respect, carrying their scenery, lighting plant and repertory. The signs of old age are seen in the incapacity to play. One of the best books I ever read was by H. G. Wells, who, with his own son, mapped out on the floor a complete military campaign with leaden soldiers and their leaden cannon. A toy theater is, therefore, a "play" much like the real thing.

The fun Stuart Walker had when he was a boy in Kentucky was remembered when he went to college, at the University of Cincinnati, and his varied experiences in play-acting, his vivid picturings of drama drawn from his favourite ballads, his intense interest in Greek and Elizabethan stages — all of these tendencies went into his imagination which took fire at the thought that he might build a theater complete, so compactly constructed as to fold up in small space. Thus the Portmanteau Theater — a most appropriate name — came into being; and it was so conceived that it could be taken anywhere, — set up in a parlour, a schoolroom, a settlement house, even a nursery, with the smallest possible expense.

Not being able at first to afford paying royalties for his dramas, Mr. Walker — gifted with a unique ability to write plays of a special character — created his own repertory, and "Six Who Pass While the Lentils Boil" was one of the

first dramas he wrote. His idea was to appeal to the imagination of his audiences — young and old alike — to suggest just enough to make those in front of his curtain imagine the rest. When you go to the theater, it is not sufficient that you think only of what is shown you; you must enter into the “make-believe” spirit of the story, just as the Elizabethans, in the time of Shakespeare — when there was little or no scenery — were content to have a sign-post on the stage reading, “This is Elsinor”, when “Hamlet” was given.

Read what the Prologue says at the very beginning of “Six Who Pass While the Lentils Boil.” Put a copper pot in the middle of the stage, and then imagine it full of boiling water, imagine the flames — imagine lots of things not there. You thus become an important part of the play — in fact as important a part as the actors and as the scenery.

Mr. Walker’s experiment, surveyed in detail in his first volume of “Portmanteau Plays” (Stewart & Kidd Co.), surprised the managers. He visited places, bag and baggage, not to be reached by the big theater; he entertained thousands of folks who were thirsting for just such artistic things as he did, inexpensively and well. Having had the estimable experience of working at one time under the guidance of Mr. David Belasco — one of America’s most artistic theater directors — he learned from that wizard of stage effect certain principles which he immediately adapted to his less extravagant needs. By the simplest means — with the minimum outlay of money — he created atmosphere, and his highest triumph was reached when he gave a series of Arabian Nights plays by Lord Dunsany, the Irish dramatist, and put on a dramatic presentment of the Book of Job. There is every reason to believe that Stuart Walker’s idea of a Toy Theater — professionally perfect in its acting and artistically beautiful in its modern scenery — could be carried further and further until it became a regular part of our village life.

If there is such a thing successfully managed as a Caravan Library, why should there not be such a thing as a Caravan Theater? At one time, Mr. Ben Greet and Mr. Charles Co-

burn entertained America in the Spring and Summer of each year with delightful series of out-door plays — given on front lawns, on college campuses, in woodland clearings. What a joy it was, on a clear Summer's day, with the afternoon sunlight dancing and sparkling like the heart of Rosalind, to sit through a performance of "As You Like It"! New professional interests have drawn these two managers in other channels.

So, with Mr. Walker, — his ambition may carry him in other directions, but his Portmanteau Theater is an idea well worth preserving and using as an excellent and vital part of the modern theater. Since the Mountain could not come to Mahomet, there was nothing else but for Mahomet to go to the Mountain. And so, often, when it is impossible for village folk or hill folk or groups of people in cities to go to the theater, put your theater in several dress-suit cases, and go to them. That's Mr. Walker's idea, and it won success. It's just as if you had a Toy Theater which you wanted to take next door for a friend to play with. It doesn't require long to move it. You tuck it under your arm.

In the Spring of 1915, the Portmanteau Theater came into existence. By rights it ought never to go out of existence. It should take root in the amusement life of everyone.

The music for the "Ballad of the Miller's Sons" and the "Ballad of the Three Little Pigs" is given in Stewart & Kidd's "Modern Plays", edited by Frank Shay.

SIX WHO PASS WHILE THE LENTILS BOIL

By STUART WALKER

It is advisable in presenting *SIX WHO PASS* to precede the play with the Prologue to *The Portmanteau Theater*, which is to be found in *PORTMANTEAU PLAYS* by Stuart Walker.

A delightful evening of plays can be made up of (1) *The Prologue to the Portmanteau Theater*, (2) *THE TRIMPLET*, (3) *NEVERTHELESS OR THE VERY NAKED BOY OR THE MEDICINE SHOW*, (4) *SIX WHO PASS WHILE THE LENTILS BOIL*. All these plays can be found in *PORTMANTEAU PLAYS* or *MORE PORTMANTEAU PLAYS*, by Stuart Walker, published by Stewart Kidd Company.

It is advisable in playing *SIX WHO PASS* not to attempt any sort of mechanical arrangement of the Butterfly. A personification of it would be even more distracting. The best plan to follow is to have a stationary, large butterfly poised somewhere near the windows in the back wall of the kitchen.

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SIX WHO PASS WHILE THE LENTILS BOIL

FIRST PERFORMANCE AT CHRISTODORA HOUSE, NEW YORK
CITY

July 14, 1917

PROLOGUE TO THE THEATER	Hugh Dillman
PROLOGUE TO THE PLAY	Henry Kiefer
THE DEVICE-BEARER	Edmond Crenshaw
IN THE AUDIENCE	Francis Stevens

THE BOY	James W. Morrison
THE QUEEN	Judith Lowry
THE MIME	Richard Farrell
THE MILKMAID	Nancy Winston
THE BLINDMAN	Joseph Graham
THE BALLAD-SINGER	Tom Powers
THE HEADSMAN	McKay Morris

At this performance, which was not open to the public, Oscar Craik manipulated the mechanism of the Butterfly. At later performances it was decided to avoid this disturbing element in so simple a play, and ever after the Butterfly poised where he could see and hear, but not distract.

First public performance at Jordan Hall, Boston, Massachusetts, February 14, 1916, and at the 39th Street Theatre, New York City, November 27, 1916.

PROLOGUE TO THE THEATER	Florence Wollersen
PROLOGUE TO THE PLAY	Lew Medbury
THE DEVICE-BEARER	Edmond Crenshaw
IN THE AUDIENCE	Agnes Rogers

THE BOY	Gregory Kelly
THE QUEEN	Judith Lowry
THE MIME	Wilmot Heitland*
THE MILKMAID	Nancy Winston
THE BLINDMAN	Edgar Stehli
THE BALLAD-SINGER	Stuart Walker
THE HEADSMAN	McKay Morris

THE BOY
 THE QUEEN
 THE MIME
 THE MILKMAID
 THE BLINDMAN
 THE BALLAD-SINGER
 THE DREADFUL HEADSMAN
 YOU (*in the audience*)

The Scene is a kitchen
The Period is when you will

*Played in New York by Willard Webster. When the play was "revived" in Indianapolis and Chicago, in 1917, the Headsman was played by George Gaul.

SIX WHO PASS WHILE THE LENTILS BOIL

Before the opening of the curtains the Prologue enters upon the fore-stage and summons the Device-Bearer who carries a large copper pot.

PROLOGUE This is a copper pot. (*The Device-Bearer shows it to the audience carefully*) It is filled with boiling water. (*The Device-Bearer makes the sound of bubbling water*) It is on the fire. See the flames. (*The Device-Bearer sets the pot in the center of the forestage and blows under it with a pair of bellows*) And see the water boiling over. (*The Device-Bearer again makes the sound of bubbling water and then withdraws to where he can see the play from the side of the fores'tage*) We are looking into the kitchen of the Boy whose mother left him alone. I do not know where she has gone but I do know that he is gathering lentils now.

YOU. What are lentils?

PROLOGUE. A lentil? Why, a lentil, don't you see, is not a bean nor yet a pea; but it is kin to both. . . . You must imagine that the boy has built the fire and set the water boiling. He is very industrious but you need not feel sorry for him. His mother is very good to him and he is safe. Are you ready now? . . . Very well. Be quiet.
[*The Prologue claps his hands twice.*]

The curtains open and a kitchen is disclosed. There are a bench, a stool and a cupboard. A great door at the back opens into a corridor. There are also two windows — one higher than the other looking upon the corridor. At the right a door opens into the bedroom of the Boy's mother. A great pewter spoon lies upon the shelf in the cupboard.

A large Butterfly comes in through the doorway, flits about and looks off stage.

The song of the Boy is heard from the garden. The Butterfly goes to the door, poises a moment, then alights on the cupboard.

The Boy enters with a great bowl filled with lentils.

The Butterfly flies to the bowl and satisfied returns to the cupboard.

The Boy smiles at the Butterfly but he does not touch him. Then he empties the lentils into the pot and water splashes on his careless hand. A moan is heard in the distance. The Boy and the Butterfly go to the door.

The Queen's voice is heard calling:

Butterfly Butterfly, where shall I hide?

Enter the Queen

QUEEN. Boy, Boy — oh, I am distraught!

YOU. What is distraught?

PROLOGUE. Distraught means distracted, perplexed, beset with doubt, worried by some fear.

BOY (*pityingly*). Why are you distraught?

QUEEN. Oh — oh — oh — They are going to behead me!

BOY. When?

QUEEN. Before midday.

BOY. Why are they going to behead you? Is it a story? Tell it to me.

QUEEN. I was guilty of a breach of etiquette.

BOY. What is that?

QUEEN. I did something that was considered bad manners and the law says the punishment is decapitation.

YOU. What is decapitation?

PROLOGUE. Decapitation is beheading; cutting off one's head.

BOY. Why, only kings and queens can be decapitated.

QUEEN. Oh, I know — I know —

BOY (*disappointed*). Are you a queen?

QUEEN. Yes.

BOY. I thought all queens were big. My mother says they are always regal. And my mother knows.

QUEEN. Oh, *I am the Queen. I am the Queen; but I am so unhappy.*

BOY. My mother told me kings and queens knew no fear.
Why, you're afraid!

QUEEN. Oh, Boy, Boy, I *am* your Queen and I *am* afraid and unhappy. And queens are just like other people when they are afraid and unhappy.

BOY (*disappointed*). Aren't they always regal?

QUEEN. No — no. Oh, little boy, hide me, hide me from the Dreadful Headsman!

BOY. I haven't any place to hide you. You couldn't get under the bench, and you couldn't get into the cupboard.

QUEEN. Little boy, can't you see that I shall lose my head if I am found?

BOY. You might have hidden in the pot if I hadn't put it on the fire.

QUEEN. Oh — Oh — Oh —

BOY. I'm sorry.

QUEEN. I am distraught.

BOY. Well, I'll hide you, because you are distraught; but — I am not sure you are a queen. . . . Where's your crown? You can't be a queen without a crown!

[*She reaches up to her head.*]

QUEEN. Oh, I was running so fast that it must have slipped from my head. (*Sees the Butterfly*) Butterfly, tell him I am your Queen.

[*The Butterfly flies to her head and lights on her disheveled locks like a diadem.*]

BOY. Oh, I have talked to the Queen! . . . You can hide in my mother's bedroom in there; but first please tell me a story.

QUEEN. They will find me here. I'll tell you a story afterward.

BOY. I want you to tell me now.

QUEEN. Well, you watch at the door and warn me when you see someone coming. (*The Butterfly brushes her ear*) But stay, the Butterfly says he'll watch. [*The Butterfly goes to the door.*]

BOY. Will he know?

QUEEN. Oh, yes. He is a wonderful butterfly — wise beyond his years.

BOY. Sit down and tell me your story. [*He places a black pillow for the Queen on the step and an orange pillow for himself.*]

QUEEN. Last night we celebrated the second year of peace with the neighbouring kingdom. We were dancing the minuet just after the banquet, when I stepped on the ring-toe of my husband the King's great-aunt.

BOY. Didn't you say excuse me?

QUEEN. It was useless. The law says that if a queen steps on the ring-toe of the King's great-aunt or any member of her family the Queen must be beheaded while the King's four clocks are striking twelve at midday.

BOY. Oh, that means to-day?

QUEEN. Yes.

BOY. Why, it's almost midday now. See, I've just set the lentils boiling.

QUEEN. If you can hide me until after the King's four clocks strike twelve I shall be safe.

BOY. Why are there four clocks?

QUEEN. Because the law allows only one clock for each tower in the castle.

BOY. Then I hear all the King's clocks every day! There's a big clock, and two clocks not so big, and a tiny little clock.

QUEEN. Yes, those are the four.

BOY. Why will you be safe *after* the four clocks strike twelve?

QUEEN. Because that is the law.

BOY. Aren't laws funny?

QUEEN. Funny? This one is very sad, I think.

BOY. Mightn't it be twelve any midday?

QUEEN. No; the Prime Minister of my grandfather who passed the law decided that it meant only the following midday.

BOY (*rising and rushing to the door*). They'll find you here.

QUEEN (*rising calmly*). Oh, no, this is the short cut to the beheading block. Through that corridor.

BOY. Why didn't you run the other way?

QUEEN. Because they always search for escaped people in that

direction. So I ran through your garden and into this room.
They'll never search for me so close to the castle.

BOY. How did you escape?

QUEEN. I —— [*The Butterfly seems agitated.*

BOY. You ——

QUEEN. Someone is coming. Hide me!

BOY. In here — in my mother's room. 'Sh! 'Sh!

[*The Queen goes out. Enter the Mime. He pokes his head in the lower window and peeps around the door. The Boy turns.*

BOY (*weakly*). Are you the Dreadful Headsman?

MIME. *What?*

BOY. Are you the Dreadful Headsman?

MIME. Do I look like a headsman?

BOY. I don't know; I've never seen one.

MIME. Well, suppose I am?

BOY. Are you?

MIME. Maybe I am.

BOY. Oh!

MIME. Booh!

BOY. I'm — I'm — not afraid.

MIME. Bah!

BOY. And my mother isn't here.

MIME. Br — r — r — r!

[*The Boy reaches for his knife.*

MIME. Bing!

BOY. I wasn't going to hurt you!

MIME. 'Sh! . . . 'Sh! . . . 'Sh! . . .

BOY. I'll give you my knife if you'll go 'way.

MIME. Ah, — ha!

BOY. It's nearly midday and you'd better go.

MIME. Well, give me the knife.

BOY. Promise me to go.

MIME (*laughs, turning away*). Aren't you going to the beheading?

BOY. No. I have to boil the lentils for our midday meal.

MIME. May I come back and eat some?

BOY. You'll have to ask my mother.

MIME. Where is she?

BOY. She's over that way. She went to the market to buy a bobbin.

YOU. What is a bobbin?

PROLOGUE. A bobbin is a spool upon which thread is wound, and it is sharp at one end so that it can be easily passed backward and forward, to and fro, through the other threads in making lace.

MIME (*starting off*). Well, I'll be back to eat some lentils.

BOY (*too eagerly*). You'd better hurry.

MIME. You seem to want to get rid of me.

BOY (*allaying suspicion*). Well, I think you'd better go or you'll be late — and it's very wrong to be late.

MIME (*going toward the door*). I think I'll — (*changing his mind*) sit down.

BOY (*disappointed*). Oh!

MIME. What would you say if I wasn't the Headsman?

BOY. But you said you were.

MIME. I said *maybe* I was.

BOY. Aren't you?

MIME. Maybe I'm not.

BOY. Honest?

MIME. Um, hum.

BOY (*relieved*). Oh! . . .

MIME. You *were* afraid.

BOY. No . . . I wasn't.

MIME. Would you fight?

BOY. You bet I would.

MIME. It wouldn't take me a minute to lick you.

BOY. Maybe it wouldn't, but I wouldn't give up right away.

That would be cowardly. . . . Who are you?

MIME. I'm a mime —

BOY. What's a mime?

MIME. A mime s a mime.

BOY. Go on and tell me.

MIME. A mime's a mountebank.

BOY. What's a mountebank?

MIME. A mountebank's a strolling player.

BOY. Are you going to perform for me?

MIME. Not to-day — I'm on my way to the decapitation.

BOY. Do you want to see the decapitation?

MIME. Well, yes. But most of all I want to pick up a few coins.

BOY. How?

MIME. Why, I'll perform after the Queen has lost her head.

BOY. Won't you be too sorry?

MIME. No. You see, I'll be thinking mostly about what I'm going to do. I have to do my best because it is hard to be more interesting than a decapitation. And after it's all over the crowd will begin to talk and to move about: and I'll have to rush up to the front of them and cry out at the top of my lungs, "Stop — Ho, for Jack the Juggler! Would you miss him? In London, where the king of kings lives, all the knights and ladies of the Court would leave a crowning to watch Jack the Juggler toss three golden balls with one hand or balance a weather-vane upon his nose." Then a silence will come upon the crowd and they will all turn to me. Someone will say, "Where is this Jack the Juggler?" And I shall answer, "Jack the Juggler, the greatest of the great, the pet of kings, entertainer to the Pope and the joy of Cathay stands before you." And I'll throw back my cloak and stand revealed. So! Someone will then shout, "Let us have it, Jack." So I'll draw my three golden balls from my pouch — like this — and then begin
[The Boy is watching breathlessly and the Butterfly is interested too. Their disappointment is keen when Jack does nothing.]

BOY. Aren't you going to show me?

MIME. No, I must be off.

BOY. Aren't you ever coming back?

MIME. Maybe, yes; perhaps, no.

BOY. I'll give you some lentils if you'll juggle the balls for me.

MIME (*sniffs the pot*). They aren't cooked yet.

BOY. Let me hold your golden balls.

MIME (*takes a gold ball from his pouch and lets the Boy hold it*).
Here's one.

BOY. And do they pay you well?

MIME (*taking the ball from the Boy*). Ay, that they do. If I am as interesting as the beheading I'll get perhaps fifteen farthings in money and other things that I can exchange for food and raiment.

BOY. I'm going to be a mime and buy a castle and a sword.

MIME. Maybe so and maybe not. Who knows? . . . Good-bye. [*He goes out*]

BOY (*to the Butterfly*). If he had been the Dreadful Headsman I would have slain him. So! . . . "Ah, wicked Headsman, you shall not behead the Queen! . . . Cross not that threshold or I'll run you through."

[*Throughout this the Butterfly shows great interest and enters into the spirit of it, being absorbed at times and frightened at others. Enter the Milkmaid at door.*]

MILKMAID. Pst! . . . Pst!

BOY (*startled*). Oh!

MILKMAID. Are you going to the decapitation?

BOY. No. Are you?

MILKMAID. That I am.

BOY. Will your mother let you go?

MILKMAID. She doesn't know.

BOY. Did you run away?

MILKMAID. No. I went out to milk the cow.

BOY. And did you do it?

MILKMAID. Yes.

BOY. Why didn't you wait until you came back?

MILKMAID. My mother was looking and I had to let her see me doing something.

BOY. How did you get away when you took the milk-pails into the house?

MILKMAID. I didn't take them in. As soon as my mother turned her back I hid the pails and I ran through here to take a short cut.

BOY. Where did you hide the milk?

MILKMAID. In the hollow tree.

BOY. Won't it sour?

MILKMAID. Maybe.

BOY. Won't your mother scold you?

MILKMAID. Yes, of course, but I couldn't miss the beheading.

BOY. Will you take the sour milk home?

MILKMAID. Yes, and after my mother scolds me I'll make it into nice cheese and sell it to the King's Cook, and then mother will forgive me.

BOY (*sniffing the pot*). You'd better hurry. It's nearly mid-day. Don't you smell the lentils?

MILKMAID. The Headsman hasn't started yet.

BOY (*giggling*). He'd better hurry.

MILKMAID. They can't find the Queen.

BOY (*so innocently*). Did she escape?

MILKMAID. Yes.

BOY. Are they hunting for her?

MILKMAID. Yes, and they've offered a big reward to the person who finds her.

BOY. How much?

MILKMAID. A pail of gold and a pair of finger rings.

BOY. That's a good deal . . . With a pail of gold I could buy my mother a velvet dress and a silken kerchief and a bonnet made of cloth of gold — and I could buy myself a milk-white palfrey.

MILKMAID. And you'd never have to work again.

BOY. But she's such a gentle Queen. Where are they hunting her?

MILKMAID. Everywhere.

BOY. Everywhere! . . . Maybe she's waiting at the beheading block.

MILKMAID. Silly goose! She wouldn't try to escape this way. She'd go in the opposite direction.

BOY. Do people always run in the opposite direction?

MILKMAID. Of course, everybody knows that.

BOY. I wish I could go.

MILKMAID. Come on.

BOY. Um — uh. The lentils might burn.

MILKMAID. Pour some cold water on them.

BOY. Um — uh. I promised I wouldn't leave the house.

MILKMAID. Oh, it will be wonderful!

BOY. The Mime will be there.

MILKMAID. The one with the long cloak and the golden balls?

BOY. Um — uh.

MILKMAID. Ooh!

BOY. How did you know?

MILKMAID. I saw him on the way to the market one day — and when my mother wasn't looking at me I gave him a farthing.

BOY. Is he a good juggler?

MILKMAID. He's magic! Why, he can throw three golden balls in the air and catch them with one hand and then keep them floating in the air in a circle.

BOY. And can he balance a weather-vane on his nose while it's turning?

MILKMAID. Yes, and he can balance an egg on the end of a long stick that is balanced on his chin!

BOY. Oh — I wish I could see him. [*Looks at the pot to see if the lentils are done.*]

MILKMAID. Come on!

BOY. Well — [*Begins to weaken and just as he is about to start, the Butterfly flies past him into the Queen's room.*]

MILKMAID. Oh — what a lovely butterfly!

BOY. No — no — I can't go. But you had better hurry.

MILKMAID. Well, I'll try to catch the butterfly first.

BOY. Oh, no, you mustn't touch that butterfly.

MILKMAID. Why?

BOY. Because — because he's my friend.

MILKMAID. Silly!

BOY. He is a good friend, and he's the wisest butterfly in the world.

MILKMAID. What can he do?

BOY. He can almost talk.

MILKMAID. Almost? . . . Oh, I know. I'm a goose. You want to play a trick on me so I'll miss the beheading.

BOY. You'd better hurry.

MILKMAID. I wish you'd come.

BOY (*sadly*). I can't. I've a duty to perform.

MILKMAID. Aren't duties always hard? [*Both sigh. She takes up her milk-pail.*]

BOY. What are you going to do with that pail?

MILKMAID. I'm going to stand on it. . . . Good-bye. [*She goes out.*]

BOY. Good-bye. (*He watches for a moment, then goes to the pot and tries the lentils; then whispers through door to the Queen*) The lentils are getting soft.

[*There is a fumbling in the passage and a voice is heard: Help the blind! Help the blind!*]

[*The Butterfly returns to the top of the cupboard. The Blind-man appears at the door.*]

PROLOGUE. He's blind, but he'll show you how the blind can see

BLINDMAN (*sniffing*). Cooking lentils?

BOY. Yes.

BLINDMAN. Cook, which way to the beheading?

BOY. Keep straight ahead — the way you are going, old man.

BLINDMAN. Don't you want to take me with you?

BOY. I'm not going.

BLINDMAN. Not going to the beheading?

BOY. No, I have to cook the lentils.

BLINDMAN. Come on and go with me and maybe I'll give you a farthing.

BOY. I can't

BLINDMAN. Yes, you can. Who else is here?

BOY (*swallowing: it's hard to fib*). No one.

BLINDMAN. Can't you run away? Your mother won't know you've gone.

BOY. It's my duty to stay here.

BLINDMAN. It's your duty to help a poor blindman, little boy.

BOY. Are you stone blind?

BLINDMAN. Yes.

BOY. Then how did you know I was a *little* boy?

BLINDMAN. Because you *sound* like a little boy.

BOY. Well, if you're stone blind why do you want to go to the beheading?

BLINDMAN. I can see with my ears.

BOY. Aw —

BLINDMAN. Didn't I know you were a little boy?

BOY. Yes, but you had to guess twice. First you thought I was a cook

BLINDMAN. Well, aren't you cooking lentils?

BOY. Yes; but you can smell them.

BLINDMAN. Well, I see with my nose, too

BOY. Aw — how can you see with your nose?

BLINDMAN. If you give me some bread I'll show you.

BOY. I can't give you any bread, but I'll give you some raw lentils.

BLINDMAN. All right. Give me lentils.

BOY. . . I'll put them by the pot. — Ready!

BLINDMAN. All right. (*Sniffs. Walks to the pot and gets lentils and puts them in an old pouck*) Isn't that seeing with my nose?

BOY. H'm! (*In wonder*) Now see with your ears and I'll give you some more lentils.

BLINDMAN. All right. Speak.

[*The Boy gets behind the stool and speaks. The Blindman goes toward him. The Boy moves around stealthily.*]

BLINDMAN. You're cheating. You've moved.

BOY (*jumping up on the bench*). Well where am I?

BLINDMAN. You're standing on something.

BOY. How did you guess it?

BLINDMAN. I didn't guess it. I know it.

BOY. Why can't I do that?

BLINDMAN. You can if you try; but it takes practice.

BOY. Can you see the door now?

BLINDMAN. No. I've turned around too many times. Besides, there is more than one door.

BOY. Oh — m-m. . . . You aren't really blind!

BLINDMAN. Blind people learn to use what they have. Once I too could see with my eyes.

BOY. Just like me?

BLINDMAN. Yes. And then I didn't take the trouble to see with my ears and my nose and my fingers — after I became blind I had to learn. . . . Why, I can tell whether a man who passes me at the palace gate is a poor man or a noble or a merchant.

BOY. How can you do that?

BLINDMAN. By the sound of the step.

BOY. Aw — how can you do that?

BLINDMAN. Shut your eyes and try it.

BOY. Well, I know what you are. That would be easy

BLINDMAN. I'll pretend I'm somebody else. [*Feels with his stick; touches bench. Feels around again.*]

BOY. Why are you doing that?

BLINDMAN. To see how far I can walk without bumping into something.

BOY. Um —

BLINDMAN. Ready?

BOY (*hides face in hands*). Yes.

BLINDMAN. Don't peep. [*The Boy tries hard not to.*]

BOY. I won't.

BLINDMAN. All ready. (*Shuffles like a commoner*) Who was it?

BOY. A poor man.

BLINDMAN. See how easy?

BOY. I could see him as plain as if I had my eyes open. . . . Now try me again

BLINDMAN. Ready?

BOY. All right.

[*The Blindman seems to grow in height. His face is filled with a rare brightness. He steadies himself a moment and then walks magnificently down the room.*]

BOY (*in beautiful wonder*). A noble! I could see him.

BLINDMAN. All you have to do is try.

BOY. I always thought it was terrible to be blind.

BLINDMAN. Sometimes it is.

BOY. But I thought everything was black.

BLINDMAN. It used to be until I taught myself how to see.

BOY. Why is it terrible sometimes?

BLINDMAN. Because I cannot help the poor who need help.

If I had money I could feed the hungry and clothe the poor little beggar children in winter!

BOY. Would a pail of gold and a pair of finger rings help you feed the hungry and clothe the poor little beggar children in winter?

BLINDMAN. A pail of gold! I have dreamed of what I might do with so much wealth!

BOY. I can get a pail of gold if I break a promise.

BLINDMAN. Would *you* break a promise?

BOY. . . . No — but — No!

BLINDMAN. Of course you wouldn't.

BOY. I couldn't break a promise for *two* pails of gold.

BLINDMAN. Nor twenty-two, little boy.

BOY. When you walked like a noble I saw a beautiful man behind my eyes with a crown of gold.

BLINDMAN. If you broke a promise for a pail of gold and two finger rings you would never see a beautiful noble with a crown of gold when you closed your eyes. . . .

BOY. Can blind men see beautiful things even when it's rainy?

BLINDMAN. Blindmen can always see beautiful things if they try. Clouds and rain are beautiful to me — and when I get wet I think of the sunshine. I saw sunshine with my eyes when I was a little boy. Now I see it with my whole body when it warms me. I saw rain with my eyes when I was a little boy. Now I see it with my hands when it falls on them — drop — drop — drop — dropity — dropity — and I love it because it makes the lentils grow.

BOY. I never thought of that. Rain makes me stay indoors, and I never like it except in June.

BLINDMAN. You don't have to stay in for long.

BOY. Can blind men see beautiful things in a beheading?

BLINDMAN. No. But I must be there with the crowd. I shall tell stories to the people and perhaps they will give me food or money.

BOY. Can't you stay and tell me stories?

BLINDMAN. No. I must be on my way. . . . If I do not see the beheading I cannot tell about it when I meet someone who was not there. Oh, I shall make a thrilling tale of it.

BOY. Tell it to me when you come back.

BLINDMAN. If you give me some cooked lentils.

BOY. I'll save you some.

BLINDMAN. Are the lentils nearly done?

BOY. Half.

BLINDMAN. I must be on my way then. . . . Good-bye.

[Starting to go in the wrong direction.]

BOY. Here's the door.

BLINDMAN. Thank you, little boy. . . . Don't forget to see with your ears and nose and fingers.

[The Blindman goes out.]

BOY. I won't.

BLINDMAN. Good-bye.

BOY. Good-bye. *(The Boy covers his eyes and tries to see with his ears and his nose)* It's easier with the ears. *[Singing is heard.]*

[Enter the Ballad-Singer.]

SINGER. Hello!

BOY. Hello!

SINGER. How are you?

BOY. I'm very well.

SINGER. That's good.

BOY. Thank you.

SINGER. Cooking?

BOY. Yes.

SINGER *(coming into the room)*. Something good?

BOY. Lentils.

SINGER. Give me some?

BOY. They aren't done.

SINGER. Nearly. I can smell them.

BOY. Do you like them?

SINGER. When I'm hungry.

BOY. Are you hungry now?

SINGER. I'm always hungry. [*They laugh.*

BOY. Were you singing?

SINGER. Yes.

BOY. Do you like to sing?

SINGER. When I get something for my ballads

BOY. Are you a ballad-singer?

SINGER. Yes.

BOY. Sing one for me?

SINGER. Give me some lentils?

BOY. I'll give you some raw lentils.

SINGER. I want some of the cooked ones.

BOY. They aren't done.

SINGER. Are they nearly done?

BOY. More than half.

SINGER. I like them that way.

BOY. All right. Sing me a ballad.

SINGER. Well, give me the lentils first.

BOY. Oh, no, sing the ballad first.

SINGER. No, sir, give me the lentils first

BOY. That isn't fair.

SINGER. Why not? After I sing to you maybe you won't pay me.

BOY. Yes, I will.

SINGER. Then why not pay me first?

BOY. You might not sing.

SINGER (*laughing*). Yes, I will.

BOY (*laughing*). Well, I'll give you some lentils at the end of each verse.

SINGER. That's a bargain.

BOY. Sing.

SINGER (*sings one line*).

Six stalwart sons the miller had ——

Give me the lentils.



SIX WHO PASS WHILE THE LENTILS BOIL
Singer (*Sings*) — "Six stalwart sons the miller had —"

BOY. Finish that verse.

SINGER. I did finish it.

BOY. Now that's not fair. You only sang a line.

SINGER. Well, a line's a verse.

BOY (*with a gesture that indicates how long a verse ought to be*).

I meant a whole verse.

SINGER (*mimicking the gesture*). A line's a whole verse.

BOY. Oh, now, be fair, I mean a *whole*, whole verse.

SINGER. You mean a *stanza*.

BOY. I always heard it called a verse.

SINGER. Well, keep the bargain. I sang a verse. Give me some lentils.

BOY (*rising and taking a very few lentils on his spoon*). Next time I mean a stanza. . . . Here are some lentils.

[*The Ballad-Singer eyes the meager portion, cools it and eats.*]

SINGER. Stingy.

BOY. Isn't that *some* lentils?

SINGER (*laughs*). Well —

BOY. Now begin again.

SINGER. At the end of every stanza a spoonful of lentils.

BOY. I didn't say a spoonful.

SINGER (*starts to go*). Very well, I won't sing a ballad.

BOY. All right. I'll give you a spoonful at the end of each — stanza. [*He sits on the floor by the pot of lentils.*]

SINGER (*sings*).

The Ballad of the Miller and His Six Sons

Six stalwart sons the miller had,

All brave and fair to see —

He taught them each a worthy trade —

And they grew gallantly.

Tara — da — da — da-da-da — da-da-da .

Tara — da — da — da-de — da-dee.

Give me some lentils.

BOY. Here. . . . Hurry up.

SINGER (*sings*).

The first was John o' the dimpled chin,
And a fist of iron had he —
He learned to wield the broadsword well,
And turned to soldiery.
Tara — da — da, etc.

BOY. Please! Please don't stop.

SINGER. Keep to the bargain.

BOY. Here, take two spoonfuls and finish without stopping.

SINGER (*sings rest of ballad*).

The second son was christened Hugh,
And curly locks had he —
He learned to use the tabour and lute
And turned to minstrelsy.
Tara — da — da, etc.

The third was James of the gentle ways,
And speech of gold had he —
He learned his psalms and learned his creed
And turned to simony.
Tara — da — da, etc.

The fourth was Dick of the hazel eye,
And a steady hand had he —
With a hammer and saw and a chest of tools
He turned to carpentry.
Tara — da — da, etc.

The fifth was Ned of the velvet tread,
And feather fingers had he —
He used his gifts in a naughty way
And turned to burglary.
Tara — da — da, etc.

The sixth was Robin, surnamed the Rare,
For always young was he —
He learned the joy of this sunny world
And turned to poetry.
Tara — da — da, etc.

The Miller approached three score and ten,
A happy man was he —
His five good sons and the one who was bad,
All turned to gallantry.
Tara — da — da, etc.

BOY. Sing me another.

SINGER. A spoonful at the end of every stanza.

BOY. Don't stop after you begin.

SINGER. Pay me in advance.

BOY. I suppose I'll have to. [*He feeds the Ballad-Singer.*]

SINGER (*sings second ballad*).

The Ballad of the Three Little Pigs

Two little pigs were pink — pink — pink —
And one little pig was black — black —
The three little pigs were very good friends,
But one little pig was black — black.

Three little pigs would play — play — play —
But one little pig was black — black —
And three little pigs would have a jolly time,
Though one little pig was black — black.

Three little pigs soon grew — grew — grew —
And one little pig was black — black.
The three little pigs became fat hogs —
And one fat hog was black — black.

The two fat hogs were pink — pink — pink —
And one fat hog was black — black.
The three fat hogs all made good ham,
Though one fat hog was black — black.

BOY. Sing me another.

SINGER. I can't. I'm tired.

BOY. Are you going to sing those at the beheading?

SINGER. What beheading?

BOY. At the Queen's beheading.

SINGER. Where?

BOY. Over there.

SINGER. When?

BOY. To-day.

SINGER. I must be going. Certainly I'll sing there and I'll take up a collection.

BOY. It's going to be before the King's four clocks strike twelve.

SINGER. It's nearly time now. If I can collect a piece of gold I can buy a vermillion robe and sing at the King's court.

BOY. I could collect a pail of gold and two finger rings and sit at the feet of the King if I'd break a promise.

SINGER. Perhaps you will.

BOY. Would you?

SINGER. I'd rather sing along the highway all my life. It is better to dream of a vermillion robe than to have one that is not honestly got.

BOY. The Blindman said something like that.

SINGER. Who said what?

BOY. The Blindman said if I broke a promise I'd never again see a beautiful noble with a golden crown when I closed my eyes.

SINGER. He was right.

BOY. When you get your vermillion robe will you let me see it?

SINGER. That I will. . . . Good-bye.

BOY. Good-bye. (*Hums a snatch of the ballads. Singer goes out.*)

[The Headsman steps into the door and plants his axe beside him for an impressive picture. The Boy turns and starts in terror.]

HEADSMAN. Have you seen the Queen?

BOY. Sir?

HEADSMAN. Have you seen the Queen?

BOY. How should I, sir? I've been cooking the lentils.

HEADSMAN. She is here!

BOY. How — could — she — be — here, sir?

HEADSMAN. Well, if she isn't here, where is she?

BOY (*relieved*). I don't know where she is if she isn't here, sir.

HEADSMAN. She has too much sense to hide so near the castle, and on the short cut to the headsman's block. . . . Do you know who I am?

BOY. I think so — sir.

HEADSMAN. Think? Don't you *know*?

BOY. Yes, sir.

HEADSMAN. Who am I, then?

BOY. You're the Dreadful Headsman.

HEADSMAN. I am the winder of the King's four clocks, *and* when I am needed I am the best headsman in three kingdoms. And *this* is my axe.

BOY. Is it sharp?

HEADSMAN. It will split a hair in two. [*Runs finger near blade meaningly.*]

BOY. Oh!

HEADSMAN. A hair in two!

BOY. Would you really cut off the Queen's head?

HEADSMAN. That's my business: to cut off heads, and the nobler the head the better my business.

BOY. She's such a nice Queen.

HEADSMAN. Have you seen her?

BOY. Y — es, sir.

HEADSMAN. When?

BOY. One day — when I was boiling some lentils.

HEADSMAN. Did you see her neck?

BOY. Yes, sir.

HEADSMAN. Not much bigger than a hair.

BOY (*desperately friendly*). Have you seen my knife?

HEADSMAN (*sharply*). I'm talking about the Queen and I'm going to talk about myself until I hear the King's trumpeter calling me to the beheading.

BOY. Yes, sir. [*Edging between the bench and door of the room where the Queen is hidden.*]

HEADSMAN. Sit down.

BOY. I'd rather stand, sir.

HEADSMAN. *Sit down!* And I'll tell you how I'm going to behead the Queen.

BOY. You can't behead her after the King's four clocks have struck twelve.

HEADSMAN. How did you know that?

BOY (*realizing his blunder*). Well —

HEADSMAN. Nobody knows that except the royal family and people of the Court.

BOY. A little — bird told — me.

HEADSMAN. Where is the little bird that I may cut its head off?

BOY. Don't hurt the little bird, but tell me how you are going to behead the Queen.

HEADSMAN. Well — (*At the stool*) This is the block. There's the Queen behind the iron gate We'll say that door is the gate. (*The Boy starts*) And out there is the crowd. Now, I appear like this, and walk up the steps. The crowd cheers, so I bow and show myself and my axe. (*He bows elaborately and poses*) Then I walk over to the gate —

BOY. Don't go in there. That's my mother's room and you might frighten *her*.

HEADSMAN. Who's in your mother's room?

BOY. *She is*.

HEADSMAN. Well, if she's in there, maybe she'd like to hear my story.

BOY. She's in bed.

HEADSMAN. Sick? (*The Boy nods vigorously*) All right. . . . Well, I've bowed to the crowd and I start for the Queen. —

If you won't open the door, you pretend you're the Queen.

BOY. I don't want to be the Queen.

HEADSMAN. Come on and pretend. I walk up to the gate — so, and open it and then I say, "Your Majesty, I'm going to cut off your head," and she bows — *bow* — (*The Boy bows*) And then I say, "Are you ready?" and she says, "I am ready." Then I blindfold her —

BOY. Now, don't blindfold me, sir!

HEADSMAN. I'm showing you how it's done.

BOY. But if you blindfold me I can't see you when you do it.

HEADSMAN (*admitting the point*). All right. . . . Then I blindfold her and I lead her to the block and I say, "Have you made your peace with Heaven?" and she says, "Yes." . . .

BOY. If you won't tell me any more I'll give you my knife.

HEADSMAN. Aren't you interested?

BOY. Yes, but your axe is so sharp and it might slip.

HEADSMAN. Sharp? It will cut a hair in two, but I know how to handle it. . . . Come on. . . . (*The Boy reluctantly falls into the picture again*) And then . . . (*Raising his axe*) And then . . . (*Headsman sees the Butterfly*) And then . . . How-d'-ye-do, Butterfly?

[*The Boy runs to the pot unnoticed by the Headsman.*]

BOY. Lentils, lentils, boil the time away,

That my good Queen may live to-day.

[*The Headsman and the Butterfly are having quite a game. Suddenly the great clock begins to strike and the two next larger follow slowly. The Headsman rushes to the back door with his axe.*]

HEADSMAN. Why doesn't the trumpeter blow his call?

[*The Boy counts the strokes of the clock and as the third clock strikes twelve he rushes to the door of the bedroom.*]

BOY. Queen! Queen! It's midday.

HEADSMAN. Queen — Queen — (*He strides to the bedroom and drags the Queen out*) The little clock hasn't struck yet! (*He pulls the Queen toward the rear door and shouts*) Here! Here! Don't let the little clock strike! I've won the pail of gold!

[*The Boy has set the bench in the doorway so that the Headsman stumbles. The Butterfly keeps flying against the Headsman's nose, which makes him sneeze.*]

BOY. No one heard you!

QUEEN. Let me go! Let me go!

HEADSMAN (*sneezing as only a headsman can*). The Queen! The Queen!

[*The little clock begins to strike. The Boy counts eagerly, one, two, three, etc. Between strokes the Headsman sneezes and shouts.*]

HEADSMAN. The Queen! The Queen!

[At the fifth stroke the Headsman falls on his knees. The Queen becomes regal, her foot on his neck. The Boy kneels at her side.]

QUEEN. Base villain! According to the law I am saved! But you are doomed. As Winder of the King's four clocks the law commands that you be decapitated because the four clocks did not strike together. Do you know that law?

HEADSMAN. Oh, Lady, I do, but I did but do my duty. I was sharpening my axe this morning and I couldn't wind the clocks. Intercede for me.

QUEEN. It is useless.

BOY. Is there any other headsman?

QUEEN. The law says the Chief Headsman must behead the chief Winder of the King's four clocks.

BOY. Can the Dreadful Headsman behead himself?

QUEEN. Aye, there's the difficulty.

HEADSMAN. Oh, your Majesty, pardon me!

BOY. Yes, pardon him.

QUEEN. On one condition: He is to give his axe to the museum and devote all his old age to the care of the King's four clocks. . . . For myself, I shall pass a law requiring the ladies of the Court to wear no jewels. So, if the King's aunt can wear no rings, she assuredly cannot have a ring-toe, and hereafter I may step where I please. . . . Sir Headsman, lead the way . . . And now, my little boy, to you I grant every Friday afternoon an hour's sport with the Mime, a spotted cow for the little Milkmaid, a cushion and a canopy at the palace gate for the Blindman, a vermillion cloak for the Ballad-Singer, a velvet gown, a silken kerchief and a cloth-of-gold bonnet for your mother, and for yourself a milk-white palfrey, two pails of gold, two finger rings, a castle and a sword . . . Arise, Sir Little Boy . . . Your arm.

BOY. May I take my knife, your Majesty?

QUEEN. That you may. *(He gets the knife and returns to her. She lays her hand on his arm)* Sir Headsman, announce our coming.

HEADSMAN. Make way — make way — for her Majesty, the Queen.

QUEEN (*correcting*). And Sir Little Boy.

HEADSMAN. What's his other name, your Majesty?

BOY (*whispering with the wonder of it all*). Davie.

QUEEN (*to the Headsman*). Davie.

HEADSMAN. Make way — make way for her Majesty, the Queen, and Sir Davie Little Boy.

[*They go out. Immediately the Boy returns and gets the pot of lentils and runs after the Queen as the Curtains close.*]

ABOUT MASTER SKYLARK

Group dramatization has become quite a sport these days; it is as exciting as any other game one might play. For you build something at the same time that you learn something; you *are* somebody at the same time that you get to know a great deal about that person. Everyone of us has read a book and wished himself the hero, or herself the heroine. Well, why not be — if the story is worth while acting, and the character worth while *being*?

It has been wisely suggested by a teacher that all the spirit of history is dried up in the irksome task of remembering dates. What is the meaning of 1492 unless you can experience some of the feeling which came over Columbus when he put forth on a trackless sea? So this teacher, Miss Knox, with her associate, Miss Lütkenhaus, through practice, have been convinced that if children go to the Museum of Art and see the picture of Columbus before Ferdinand and Isabella, if they dramatize the scene, and study how to dress the parts and write out for themselves the dialogue suitable for Monarch and suppliant, these children will learn more about Columbus than the history books aim to teach in the early grades; and incidentally they will learn to write good English, which they will speak intelligently and distinctly.

Thus, when a class in school is to dramatize a story, such class is divided into working groups, each one of which is responsible for some feature of the production as a whole. The trades-guilds, in medieval times, gave miracle plays in this way, as far as presentation is concerned. When, finally, the play is done, everyone has had a hand in its creation.

I have always believed, following the history of the Yale Dramatic Association, of Yale University, that the boys who produced a Shakespeare or a Sheridan or an Ibsen play — being

responsible for its every detail, as well as for the arrangement of the "book of the play" — knew more about it in the end — because of their active work in producing it — than the boys who spent days in a minute study of every word of the text. So it is, even in the early years, when dramatization is a game, — when this child is Queen Bess, when the other is Sir Walter Raleigh, and they visualize and vitalize the fictitious incident of the cloak and puddle of water.

All schools and colleges are playing this game seriously. At the University of North Dakota and at the University of North Carolina — both under the inspiration of Dr. Frederick Koch; at the Francis W. Parker School, in Chicago; and at Public School No. 15, Borough of Manhattan, New York, this cooperative method of playwriting and producing has been used with great success. Miss Knox and Miss Lütkenhaus dedicate their volume of "Plays for School Children" (Century) in the following manner:

"We dedicate this book to all children who love a good story, with this message: If you would become better and better acquainted with your favourite heroes and heroines in fiction and history, be the hero — act your part and act it well, and by-and-by you will find yourself growing into the fine qualities of the character you love and growing out of the uglinesses of that you despise."

In other words, you can dramatize Mother Goose, or you can be Rosalind, in "As You Like It", or you can learn a lot about the Elizabethan Age by being Master Skylark to the full bent of your power, and the full opportunity of the part.

Read John Bennett's story, "Master Skylark", and see whether the play here made from it is as interesting; compare this version with Edgar White Berrill's longer dramatization of the same, and determine whether it would be easier for you to do the longer or the shorter play — whether the latter is not more practicable for your purpose.

And, in the preparations for your presentation of "Master Skylark" — should you care to give it — turn to the story,

wherein you will find the music for Nick's song; turn to a good collection of college songs for Ben Jonson's lyric and music; and be sure, in your selection of the music for "Hark, hark, the lark", that you choose the one most in accord with the spirit of the words.

In steeping yourself in the atmosphere of Master Skylark's times, there are a number of excellent books to read: W. J. Rolfe's "Shakespeare the Boy", Black's "Judith Shakespeare", Charles Lamb's "Tales from Shakespeare", Mrs. Cowden-Clarke's "Girlhood of Shakespeare's Heroines", and Imogen Clark's "Will Shakespeare's Little Lad."

And if there are over-ambitious readers who wish to go further in their preparations, I would refer them to Sidney Lee's "Life of Shakespeare", Dowden's "Shakespeare: His Mind and Art", and Hamilton Mabie's "William Shakespeare: Poet, Dramatist and Man."

Readers of *St. Nicholas* magazine will remember other stories by John Bennett, notably "Barnaby Lee." But I remember him best for his silhouette drawings which, as a boy, first fired my enthusiasm for shadow pictures.

As for "Master Skylark" I would suggest that time might not be ill-spent in considering the Royal Chapel children of the early days and the young men — mere lads — who were accustomed to play the women's rôles in Shakespeare's comedies, when they were first written.

MASTER SKYLARK

A Dramatization of the Book by JOHN BENNETT. Prepared for the use of
Elementary Schools in New York City by ANNA M. LÜTKENHAUS,
Director of the Dramatic Club of Public School
15, Borough of Manhattan.

Characters

MASTER SKYLARK (Nick Attwood)

MR. ATTWOOD, *father of Master Skylark*

MRS. ATTWOOD, *mother of Master Skylark*

MASTER-PLAYER *and other players*

WILL SHAKESPEARE

BEN JONSON

CICELY

FRIENDS of Will Shakespeare

BOYS of *Singing School in London*

QUEEN ELIZABETH *and courtiers, etc.*

Time: 1596. Place: Stratford-upon-Avon, London.

Time required for production, forty-five minutes.

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MASTER SKYLARK

FIRST SCENE

Near Attwood Cottage, in Stratford. Boys standing, watching and listening.

HERALD. The Master-Players come to Stratford Town.

NICK ATTWOOD. They 're coming, Robin — hark ye to the trampling!

OTHER BOYS (*jumping up on fence*). They 're coming! they 're coming! they 're coming!

ANOTHER BOY (*running up*). Who? Who?

BOY. Did you not hear? At dawn the Oxford carrier brought the news. The players of the Lord High Admiral are coming to Stratford out of London, from the South, to play on May-day here.

BOYS. They 're coming!

A BOY (*running before the Players*). There 's a lot of them and oh, the bravest banners and attire — and the trumpets are a cloth-yard long!

PLAYERS (*Orchestra plays. Singing*).

The hunt is up, the hunt is up,
Sing merrily we, the hunt is up!
The wild birds sing,
The dun deer spring,
The forest aisles with music ring!
Tantara, tantara, tantara!
Then ride along, ride along!

[*Boys follow around the stage after the Players, and then follow them out.*]

SECOND SCENE

HERALD. Nick Attwood (Master Skylark) is refused permission to attend the play.

[Nick runs in and stumbles.]

FATHER. What madcap folly art thou up to now?

[Angrily.]

NICK. I be up to no folly at all.

FATHER. Then be about thy business!

NICK. I have been about my business, sir: I have carried out the old, foul rushes, and prepared the room just as ye told me to do.

MOTHER *(puts arm around Nick)*. Thou art mine own good little son, and I shall bake thee a cake on the morrow for thy May-day feast.

NICK *(eagerly)*. The Lord High Admiral's Company is to act a stage-play at the guildhall to-morrow before Master Davenant and the Mayor and town-burgesses.

MOTHER. What will they play?

NICK. I can not say surely, mother — "Tamburlaine", or perhaps "The Troublesome Reign of Old King John." The play will be free, father; may I go?

FATHER. And lose thy time from school?

NICK. There is no school to-morrow, sir.

FATHER. Then have ye naught to do, but waste the day in idle folly?

MOTHER. It is May-day, Simon, and a bit of pleasure —

FATHER. Pleasure? If he does not find pleasure in his work, his book, and his home, he shall not seek it of low rogues.

MOTHER. But, Simon, surely they are not all graceless! Since mine own cousin, Anne Hathaway, married Will Shakespeare, the play-actor, 't is scarcely kind to call all players rogues.

FATHER. No more o' this, Margaret! Thou art ever too ready with the boy's part against me. He shall not go — so that is all there is about it.

[Goes abruptly out.]

NICK *(with clenched fist)*. Mother —

MOTHER (*softly*). Nicholas?

NICK. But, mother, surely it cannot be wrong, when the Queen —

MOTHER. To honour thy father? Nay, lad, it is thy bounden duty.

NICK. Mother, are you an angel come down out of Heaven?

MOTHER. Nay, I be only the everyday mother of a fierce little son who hath many a hard, hard lesson to learn.

THIRD SCENE

HERALD. Nick runs away and meets the Master-Player.

ROBIN (*one of the schoolboys*). Oh, Nick, such goings-on! Stratford Council has had a quarrel, and there's to be no stage-play after all.

NICK. What!

ROBIN. I heard my father talking about it. They were not served quickly enough at the inn and seized the order of Sir Thomas. Some drew swords. Sir Edward sprang up and said it was a shame to behave so outrageously in Will Shakespeare's own town, and Sir Thomas swore that all stage-players were rogues and Will Shakespeare neither more nor less than a deer-stealing scape-gallus!

NICK. Surely he did not say that in the Stratford Council!

ROBIN. Ay, but he did. And the Master-Player sprang upon the table and said that Will Shakespeare was his very own true friend and the sweetest fellow in all England, and threw his glove in one of their faces. Then Sir Thomas refused them license to play here. And Master John Shakespeare said there would be plenty of trouble when he sent word to his son Will and the Lord High Admiral of London.

NICK. But where did they go?

ROBIN. To Coventry, the next town, — and left the Master-Player behind in gaol. But this morning they cooled, and were in a pretty stew for fear of giving offense to the Lord Admiral, — and so they gave him his freedom and a chain beside.

NICK. Whee-ew! — I wish I were a master-player!

ROBIN. He swore he would be revenged on Stratford Town, and that he would walk the whole distance rather than use one of the horses that the burgesses sent him.

NICK. Is he at the inn? Why, let 's go down and see him!

ANOTHER BOY. Master Brunswood says he will birch whoever comes late.

NICK. Birch? Why, he does nothing but birch! A fellow cannot say his verbs without catching it! As for cases — not without a downright thrashing! I shall not stand it any longer, I 'll run away!

BOY (*laughing*). And when the skies fall we 'll catch sparrows. Whither shall you run?

NICK (*defiantly*). To Coventry, after the stage-players. (*Boys laugh*) You think I shall not. Well, I 'll show you. There are bluebells blowing in the dingles, and while you are all grinding at your old grammar I shall be roaming over the hills. Ay, I shall be out where the birds can sing and the grass is green, and I shall see the stage-play.

ANOTHER BOY (*mockingly*). We shall have but bread and milk and you will have — a most glorious thrashing from your father when you come home to-morrow night.

NICK. 'T is a thrashing either way. Father will thrash me if I run away and Master Brunswood will thrash me if I don't. If I must take a thrashing, I 'll have my good day's game out first.

[*Starts to go away.*]

ROBIN (*running after him*). But are you really going to Coventry?

NICK. Ay, truly, Robin, that I am. (*Runs out. Boys go off stage talking excitedly. Nick comes back, singing*)

List to the skylark, o'er the meadows winging,
Message of happiness to the earth 't is bringing;
Joy bells are ringing, caroling, swinging,



MASTER SKYLARK

Fourth Scene

Master-Player. — "Upon my heart, he has a skylark prisoned in his throat! Well sung, Master Skylark! Where did you learn that song?"

Vanished is every sadness:
List to the skylark, o'er the meadows winging,
Message of gladness to the earth 't is bringing.¹

FOURTH SCENE

[*Nick singing.*]

MASTER-PLAYER. My soul, my soul, it is the boy! Upon my heart, he has a skylark prisoned in his throat! Well sung, Master Skylark! Where did you learn that song?

NICK (*hat off, and gazing with all admiration at Master-Player*). Mother taught me part and the rest just came, I think, sir. But, but, ye surely, sir, are the Master-Player!

MASTER-PLAYER. A murrain on that town of Stratford, but vengeance will be mine. (*Changing voice to a gentle tone*) Nay, lad, look not so dashed. That is only the mighty tragic style. Be known to me, lad; what is your name? I like your open, pretty face.

NICK. Nick Attwood is my name, sir.

MASTER-PLAYER. Nick Attwood, a good name! And you are a good fellow, and I love you. So you are going to Coventry to see the fellows act? Come, I am going to join my mates. You will stay with us and dine with us?

NICK. Indeed, sir, I shall, and that right gladly!

MASTER-PLAYER (*laughing*). Put on your cap, we are but two good faring fellows here. (*Looks back*) Upon my word yours is as fair a town as the heart of man could wish. Wish? — I wish it were sunken in the sea!

NICK (*sings a few lines of song*).

MASTER-PLAYER (*Thinking deeply. Suddenly slaps thigh*). I'll do it. I'll do it if I dance on air for it! I'll have it out of canting Stratford Town. It is the very thing. His eyes are like twin holidays, and he breathes the breath of Spring. — Nicholas — Nicholas Skylark — Master Skylark — why it is the very name! I'll do it —

NICK (*timidly*). Did you speak to me, sir?

¹ Chopin's "Spring Song." Words by Louis C. Elson. (Adapted.) From the New Ed. Music Course, Teachers' Edition for Elementary Grades.

MASTER-PLAYER. Nay, lad.

NICK. What will you play for the Mayor's play, sir?

MASTER-PLAYER. I don't know; it will all be done before I come. They had the free play to-day to catch the pence of May-day crowd to-morrow.

NICK (*stopping; eyes filling with tears*). I thought the free play would be on the morrow — and now I have not a farthing to go in.

MASTER-PLAYER (*laughing*). Tut, tut, you silly lad! Am I your friend for nothing? Why, Nick, I love you, lad. You shall have a part in the play to-morrow; I shall teach it to you.

NICK. What, Master Carew, I — truly? With the Lord Admiral's Players?

MASTER-PLAYER. Why surely! and here is Coventry and here are the other players.

PLAYERS [*They shout and clap at the sight of Master-Player*].

MASTER-PLAYER. Thanks for these kind plaudits, gentle friends. I have returned.

PLAYER. Yes, we see you have.

MASTER-PLAYER. You see I have left the spoiler spoiled. Be known, be known all! Gentlemen, my Lord Admiral's Players, Master Nicholas Skylark, the sweetest singer in all the Kingdom of England! (*Men laugh and wink at each other*) No jest, gentlemen. He has a sweeter voice than Cyril Davy's, and he shall sing at our play to-morrow.

PLAYER. To-morrow?

MASTER-PLAYER. Yes, and I shall teach him some lines and then (*turning to Nick*) we shall teach you to dance.

NICK. Dance?

MASTER-PLAYER. Like this — (*Dances, with other Players keeping time with him*). And now for some wine.

[*As they start out, Nick stops the Master-Player*].

NICK. And to-morrow night I must walk back to my mother.

MASTER-PLAYER. Walk? Nay, Nicholas, you shall ride back to-morrow to Stratford like a very king.

[*Nick goes out*].

A PLAYER (*angrily*). I shall have no hand in this affair, Gat Carew!

MASTER-PLAYER. Hold thy blabbing tongue, Heywood!

[*Exeunt.*]

FIFTH SCENE

HERALD. Nick's father hears that he has gone with the players.

MR. ATTWOOD. Robin Getley, was my son with you overnight?

ROBIN. Nay, Master Attwood. Has he not come back?

MR. ATTWOOD. Come back? From where? (*Robin hesitates*)

From where? Come, boy!

ANOTHER BOY. He went to see the player, sir. He said he would bide with his uncle overnight, and he said he wished he were the Master-Player.

MR. ATTWOOD (*very angrily, turns to a man*). Were you in Coventry, May-day?

MAN. Is it Nicholas you seek? Why, sir, he's gone and got famous, sir. He sang there with the Lord High Admiral's Players; and sir, you'd scarce believe it, but people went just daft to hear him sing, sir. They say, he has gone to London with them.

MRS. ATTWOOD (*running to meet him*). Nicholas?

MR. ATTWOOD. Never speak to me of him again. He has gone his own wilful way, let him follow it to the end! He has gone away with a pack of stage-playing rascals and vagabonds, whither no man knoweth.

[*All pass out, Mrs. Attwood heart-broken.*]

SIXTH SCENE

HERALD. Nick is stolen by the players.

At the Master-Player's house in London. Nick, sitting, the picture of despair, in a big chair. Cicely, the Player's daughter, comes in.

CICELY. Boy, boy, where are your manners? (*Nick bows*)

Why, boy, you are a very pretty fellow. You look like a good boy! Why will you be so bad and break my father's heart?

NICK (*stammering*). Break your father's heart? Prithee, who is your father, Mistress Princess?

CICELY. Nay. I am no princess. I am Cicely Carew.

NICK (*clenching his fists*). Cicely Carew? Are you the daughter of that wicked man, Gaston Carew?

CICELY (*passionately*). My father is not wicked! You shall not say that — I will not speak with you at all.

NICK. I do not care! If Master Gaston Carew is your father, he is the wickedest man in the world!

CICELY (*stamping her foot*). Fie, for shame! How dare you say such a thing?

NICK (*indignantly and choking with emotion*). He has stolen me from home, and I shall never see my mother any more!

CICELY (*coming over and patting his head*). There, don't cry!

My father will send you home to your mother, I know, for he is very kind and good. Some one has lied to you about him. Are you hungry? There is a pasty and a cake in the buttery, and you shall have it if you will not cry any more. Come, I cannot bear to see you cry, — it makes me weep myself, and that will blear mine eyes, and father will feel badly. Come (*holding out hand*), 't is I should weep, not you; for my mother is dead. I do not think I ever saw her that I know, for she was a French woman who served a murdered queen, and she was the loveliest woman that ever lived. But I am a right English girl for all that, and when they shout "God save the Queen" at the play, I do too! And, boy, it is a brave thing to hear! It drove the Spaniards off the sea, my father often says.

NICK. Pooh! They cannot beat us Englishmen! Do you truly think your father will let me go?

CICELY. Of course he will; I cannot see why you do hate him so.

NICK. Why, truly, perhaps it is not your father that I hate, but only that he will not let me go, — and if he would, perhaps I'd love him very much indeed.

[*Master-Player has come softly in.*]

MASTER-PLAYER. Good, Nick! thou art a trump! Come, lad, your hand. (*Holding out both hands to Nick*) 'T is spoken

like a gentleman. Nay, I shall kiss you, for I love you, Nick, upon my word, and on the remnant of mine honour!
[Takes Nick's hand and kisses him on the forehead.]

CICELY. Father, have you forgotten me?

MASTER-PLAYER. Nay, sweetheart, nay.

[Places arm around her.]

CICELY (*patting his cheek*). Father, some one has told him naughty things about you. Come, daddy, say they are not so.

MASTER-PLAYER (*uneasily coughing*). Why, of course they 're not.

CICELY. There, boy! I told you so. Why, daddy, they said that you had stolen him away from his own mother, and would not let him go. You 'll send him home again, daddy, will you not?

MASTER-PLAYER (*nervously*). Yes, yes, why to be sure, — we 'll send him anywhere you say, Goldenheart, — but he is to sing for our good Queen Bess, first.

NICK. But will you truly let me go?

MASTER-PLAYER. Yes, yes. But stay a while with Cicely and me, — we shall make you a right welcome guest.

CICELY (*clapping her hands*). Oh, do stay. I am so lonely. And do you truly, truly sing?

MASTER-PLAYER. Ay, like a skylark. He will often sing for you.

SEVENTH SCENE

HERALD. The other players object to Nick's being kept from his mother.

A PLAYER. I hear the "Master Skylark" has twice tried to escape. He tried to reach his cousin Will Shakespeare.

ANOTHER PLAYER. Carew is having him taught at the school — Cathedral School of Music and Acting — the precentor is wild over him.

MASTER HEYWOOD. He told me he was to go home soon. (*Turning to the Master-Player, who has come in*) Carew, how can you have the heart?

MASTER-PLAYER. Come, Heywood, I have heard enough of this. Will you please to mind your own affairs!

[Places hand on poniard.]

HEYWOOD. How, quarrel with me, Carew? What ugly poison has been filtered through your wits? Quarrel with me, who has shared your every trouble, even ——

MASTER-PLAYER (*sadly*). Don't, don't, Tom.

HEYWOOD. Then how can you have the heart?

MASTER-PLAYER (*bitterly*). 'T is not the heart, Tom, 't is the head. For, Tom, I cannot let him go. Have you not heard him sing? Why, Tom, it is worth a thousand pounds. How can I let him go?

HEYWOOD. Oh, fie, for shame upon the man I took thee for!

MASTER-PLAYER. But, Tom, look it straightly in the face, — I am no such player as I was. This reckless life has done the trick for me, — and there's Cicely too, and I shall be gone. Nay, no more of it, I cannot let him go!

[All pass out.]

EIGHTH SCENE

HERALD. Nick, and a few boys from the Cathedral School, sing before Queen Elizabeth.

A BOY. Ho, boy! Master Skylark! Nick, the news, the news! Have you heard the news? (*Other Boys, pushing and talking*) We are going to Court! Hurrah! Hurrah! The Queen has sent for us. You are to sing.

NICK. The Queen — has sent for us?

ALL. Ay, sent for us to come to Court! Hurrah for Queen Bess!

[Run out shouting.]

[Orchestra plays. Trumpets blow. Queen Elizabeth and Courtiers pass in. The Queen gives signal for the children to come forward.]

PROMPTER. Rafe Fullerton.

RAFE. It is a masque of Summer-time and Spring, wherein both claim to be best loved. They have their say of wit and humour, and each her part of songs and dances suited to her

time, the sprightly galliard and the nimble jig for Spring, the slow pavone, the stately peacock dance, for Summer-time. And win who may, fair Summer-time or merry Spring, the winner is but that beside our Queen! (*Snapping his fingers*) God save Queen Bess!

[*Court laughs and claps.*]

NICK AND COLLEY (*With a garland of flowers about them. They sing a Spring Song.*)

NICK (*sings Skylark song*).

QUEEN. It is a good song, there are no songs like the English songs — there is no spring like an English spring — there is no land like England, *my* England! I will speak with these lads. (*Boys kneel before Queen. Touching their shoulders*) Stand, dear lads, be lifted up by your own singing, as our hearts have been lifted by your song. And name me the price of that same song; 't was sweeter than the sweetest song we ever heard before. (*Touching Colley on the cheek*) Come, what will you have of me, fair one?

COLLEY. That I may stay in the palace forever and sing for your Majesty.

QUEEN. Now, that is right prettily asked. You shall indeed stay for a singing-page in our household, — a voice and a face like yours are merry things upon a rainy Monday. And you, Master Lark, you that come up out of the field with a song like those the angels sing, what will you have, that you may sing in our choir and play on the lute for us?

NICK. That I may go to my mother. Let me go home.

QUEEN. Surely, boy, this is an ill-considered speech, or else this home of yours must be a very famous place.

[*Court laughs, which makes Nick angry.*]

NICK. I would rather be there than here.

QUEEN. You are more curt than courteous. Is it not good enough for you here?

NICK. I could not live in such a place.

QUEEN. In such a place? These others find no fault with the life.

NICK. Then they be born to it, or they could not abide it, —

no more than I; they would not fit. (*Court laughs*) I could not sleep in the bed last night — it was a very good bed, your Majesty — but the mattress puffed up like a cloud in a bag, and almost smothered me, and it was so hot that it gave me a fever.

QUEEN (*laughing*). Upon my word it is an odd skylark that cannot sleep in feathers. But there are acres to spare — you shall have your pick; come, we are ill-used to begging people to be favoured — you 'll stay?

NICK (*shakes his head*).

QUEEN. It is a queer fancy makes a face at such pleasant dwelling! What is it sticks in your throat? (*Taps with her fan*) You are bedazzled. Think twice. Consider well. Come, will you accept? (*Nick shakes his head . . . Angrily*) Go then. (*Pulls Colley toward her*) Your comrade has more wit!

NICK. He has no mother. I should rather have my mother than his wit.

QUEEN (*softly*). You are no fool, or if you are I like the breed. It is a stubborn froward dog, but Hold-fast is his name. Ay, sirs (*looking at Court*), Brag is a good dog, but Hold-fast is better. A lad who loves his mother thus makes a man who loves his native land, — and it 's no bad streak in the blood. Master Skylark, you shall have your wish; to your home you shall go this very night. You may kiss my hand. [*Music and horn while Queen and Court, followed by children, pass out.*]

NINTH SCENE

HERALD. After the Master-Player is sent to prison for killing a man, Nick and Cicely come back to Stratford Town.

CICELY. Nick, what is that?

NICK. A bird.

CICELY. A truly bird! O, Nick, when will my father come? It seems so long since those men came and took him away, and they would not let me go to him. And then you told me your cousin, Will Shakespeare, had seen you and prom-

ised to take you home. Then we ran away together, because that bad man, who hated my father, tried to take me; and are we near Stratford, Nick?

NICK. Here is a chance to stay for the night, and to-morrow we shall be in Stratford. Good e'en, good folk. We need somewhat to eat and we want a place to sleep. The beds must be right clean — we have good appetites. If you can do for us, we will dance anything you may desire — the Queen's own measure, the new *Allemande*. Which does it please you, mistresses?

ONE OF THE WOMEN. La, Joan, he calls you mistress! Speak up.

NICK. Or if you will, the little maid shall dance the *coranto* for you, straight from my Lord Chancellor's dancing-master.

ANOTHER WOMAN. Why, hark ye — they do look cleanlike! I'll do for them to-night, so now, dears, now let's see the Lord Chancellor's tantrums.

NICK. 'T is not tantrums, goody, but a *coranto*.

WOMAN. La! young master.

NICK. Now, Cicely.

[*Cicely dances. Nick hums and snaps fingers for time.*]

WOMAN. La me! she does not even touch the ground. (*Turning toward large stout girl*) Doll, why can't you do that?

[*Others laugh.*]

DOLL. Tut, I have no wings in my feet.

CICELY (*running to Nick*). Was it all right?

NICK. Right? It was better than you ever did. See, they are motioning to us to come in.

TENTH SCENE

HERALD. Nick's father refuses to receive him until Will Shakespeare intercedes. At last Nick gets back to his mother.

NICK. See, there is the smoke from our house. It is my father, Cicely (*Laughs*) Father! Father!

MR. ATTWOOD. Are you calling me?

NICK. Why, Father, do you not know me? 'T is I — 't is

Nick — come home! (*Father turns back and walks away*)

Why, Father, what! see, it is I, Nick, thy son!

MR. ATTWOOD. I do not know you, boy; you cannot enter here.

NICK. Why, Father, I've come home!

MR. ATTWOOD. Have I not told you twice I do not know you!

You have no part or parcel here. Get out of my sight.

NICK. O Father, Father!

MR. ATTWOOD. Do not "father" me more, I am no father to stage-playing vagabond rogues. And be gone, I say. Do you hear? (*Raises hand*) Must I e'en thrust you forth?

CICELY. O, Nick, come away; the wicked, wicked man!

NICK. It is my father, Cicely.

CICELY. And you do hate my father so! Come, let us go back; my father will not turn us out. Look, there is Susan Shakespeare!

SUSAN SHAKESPEARE (*comes running up*). My father has been hunting you all the way from London Town!

WILL SHAKESPEARE. You young rogue, how you have forestalled us. Why, here we have been weeping for you as lost, strayed, or stolen, and all the time you were nestling in the bosom of your own sweet home. How is the beloved little mother?

NICK (*falteringly*). I have not seen my mother. Father will not let me in.

WILL SHAKESPEARE. What? How?

NICK. My father will not have me any more, sir — said I will never be his son again. Oh, Master Shakespeare, why did they steal me from home?

WILL SHAKESPEARE. Why, this is a sorry tale! Does the man know that you were stolen, that you were kept against your will, that you have trudged half-way from London for your mother's sake?

NICK. He will not let me tell him, sir. He would not listen to me!

BEN JONSON. The muckle shrew! Why, I'll have this out with him. By Jupiter, I'll read him reason with a vengeance!

WILL SHAKESPEARE. Nay, Ben, cool thy blood, — a quarrel will not serve. This tanner is a bitter-minded, heavy-handed man; he'd only throw you into a pickling-vat. The children must be thought about.

ONE OF THE MEN. Here's a player's daughter who has no father, and a player whose father will not have him, orphaned by fate and disinherited by folly, common stock to us all. Kind hearts are trumps, my honest Ben; make it a stock company, and let us all be in it.

ANOTHER MAN. Will, the lad would make a better "Rosalind" than Roger Prynne for your new play.

WILL SHAKESPEARE. So he would, but before we put him into "As You Like It," — suppose we ask him how he does like it. Now, Nick, you have heard what these gentlemen have said, what have you to say, my lad?

NICK. Why, sirs, you are all kind, very, very kind indeed, sirs, but I — I — want my mother — oh, masters, I do want my mother! .

[One of the men turns abruptly and walks out; he comes back with Nick's father.]

WILL SHAKESPEARE. Sing your last song, Ben.

[Sits down and draws Nick to him.]

BEN JONSON. *[Sings]* "Drink to me only with thine eyes."

MR. ATTWOOD. My son, my only son! Master Will Shakespeare, I've come about a matter.

WILL SHAKESPEARE. Out with it, sir; there is much here to be said. Come, say what you have to say.

MR. ATTWOOD. There's naught I can say, but that I be sorry and want my son! Nick! Nick! I be wrung for you! Will you not come home — just for your mother's sake, if you will not come for mine?

NICK *(joyfully)*. Father! — but Cicely?

MR. ATTWOOD. Bring the lass with you, Nick; we'll make out, lad, we'll make out. God will not let it all go wrong. Will you come, lad?

NICK. O Father, mother will be glad to have Cicely, won't she?

WILL SHAKESPEARE *(carrying two bags)*. I have a little story

to tell you all. When Gaston Carew, lately Master-Player to the Lord High Admiral's Company, was arraigned before my Lord Justice for the killing of that rascal, he sent for some ——

BEN JONSON. *One you mean.*

WILL SHAKESPEARE. He left these two bags of gold, one marked for my only beloved daughter, Cicely Carew, with my love forever; and the other marked: Nicholas Attwood, *alias* Master Skylark, whom I, Gaston Carew, Master-Player, stole away from Stratford Town, Anno Domini, 1596. — He also begged that Nicholas Attwood would forgive him.

NICK. Why, that I shall; he was wondrous kind to me, except that he would not let me go.

WILL SHAKESPEARE. These funds, Attwood, will keep you easy-minded. Now I need a tenant for this new place of mine. You have always been spoken of as an honest man. What say you, Simon Attwood?

MR. ATTWOOD. Why, sir, why, sirs, all of you, I have been a hard man, and somewhat of a fool. Ay, sirs, a very fool! God knows I'm sorry for it from the bottom of my heart.
[*Buries head in arms.*]

WILL SHAKESPEARE. Nay, Simon Attwood, you have only been mistaken. Come, sit up and eat with us. Come, neighbour.

MR. ATTWOOD. Nay, I shall go home. I thank you, sirs. You have been good to my boy. There are kind hearts in the world that I had not dreamed of. I shall go home to my wife. There be things to say before the boy comes home, and I have muckle need to tell her that I love her, — I have not done so these many years.

BEN JONSON. Why, Neighbour Tanner, you are a right good fellow. A toast, all: "Here's to all kind hearts!"

WILL SHAKESPEARE. Wherever they may be!

[*Attwood goes off the stage and instantly returns with wife.*]

MR. ATTWOOD. Margaret.

MRS. ATTWOOD. Simon, what is it?

MR. ATTWOOD. Naught, Margaret; — but you have been a

good wife; our lad is coming home; and I love you,— is it too late to tell you?

MRS. ATTWOOD. Nay, Simon, never too late to mend, — but our boy? (*Nick runs across the stage, followed by the men. . . . Holding him to her heart*) My boy!

NICK. Mother, Mother dear, I have been to London Town; I have been to the palace; and I have seen the Queen; but Mother, I have never been to the place where I should rather be than just where you are, Mother dear.

[*Tableau: Father puts an arm around Cicely.*]

THE END

ABOUT ALICE IN WONDERLAND

I could wish young readers no better time than an afternoon with five books: S. D. Collingwood's "Life and Letters of Lewis Carroll" (Century), Belle Moses's "Lewis Carroll" (Appleton), a good edition of "Alice in Wonderland", and the play which Miss Gerstenberg has made from the immortal nonsense stories of "Alice in Wonderland" and "Through the Looking-Glass." Others have tried to write stories just as whimsical, but they have not succeeded because, first, they did not have the requisite genius, but principally because they were not Lewis Carroll.

There are two things hardly believable in the case of Lewis Carroll, whose real name was Charles Lutwidge Dodgson: that he was a man of holy orders, and that he had a wide reputation as a mathematician and lecturer at Oxford, besides writing profound books on Algebra, Geometry, Trigonometry, and Euclid in particular. When "Alice" was published, the public could not reconcile these two sides to Lewis Carroll's nature. It took the children to see in the shy, almost precise "don" of the University, who stammered slightly, the fun lover that he was, who could tell tales just as he wrote them, and whose letters to his young friends are full of quaint conceits, wholesome truths and enjoyable nonsense.

If you will read the biographies I have mentioned you will discover how "Alice in Wonderland" was born in a boat one midsummer day, on the Thames River, when the real Alice Liddell started Lewis Carroll on the road toward fame and fortune farthest away from mathematics. If you will read further, you will find that one of Lewis Carroll's dearest friends was little Isa Bowman, who played Alice in the Royal Globe Theater's performance (London, December, 1888) of a musical dream play, founded on the "Alice" books, by H. Savile Clark,

with music by Walter Slaughter. It had been previously given at the Prince of Wales's Theater, December, 1886, and Mr. Dodgson had written a song for it to be sung by the Ghosts of the Oysters, and had also concocted "'Tis the Voice of the Lobster."

And the interesting thing about Lewis Carroll is that the more friends he made, the more pictures he took of them — of the Liddell children, of Eily Macdonald — whose father, George Macdonald, wrote the ever refreshing story for boys and girls, called "At the Back of the North Wind", and others. When the camera was just coming into use, Mr. Dodgson was accustomed to have everyone "sit" for him. His friends Alfred Tennyson, John Ruskin, Charlotte M. Yonge, John Millais — the painter, John Tenniel — who won as much fame out of illustrating "Alice" as Lewis Carroll did from writing the stories, Ellen and Kate Terry — all of these famous people faced the lens of Mr. Dodgson's camera.

He had no children of his own, and hence he had all the more love to expend on other people's; his affection went out to all little girls, and, while it was not possible for Lewis Carroll to be unresponsive to anyone who was young, he was not natural with little boys. But still, though "Alice in Wonderland" is a story about a heroine only, both girls and boys love it. Which only goes to show that imagination has nothing to do with discrimination between dresses and roundabouts.

I would have been sorely disappointed had Miss Gerstenberg's Christian name been any other than Alice. Alice was the inspiration for the story, and the name Alice should always be kept in the Lewis Carroll family, as far as possible. Not only that, but whenever an "Alice" play is given, the costume designs ought to be based on the Tenniel pictures, as they were when Isa Bowman was the Alice, and later when Vivian Tobin was the Alice in America. For only Tenniel could have fathomed the natural history of the Dormouse and the March Hare, of the White Rabbit and the Cheshire Cat, to say nothing of the Mock Turtle and the Gryphon, — just as he irresistibly pictured the physiognomy of the Water Baby for Charles

Kingsley's classic. "Alice in Wonderland" is an unusual natural history book.

There is another dramatization of "Alice in Wonderland" by Maud I. Findlay (London, 1919), and Miss Lütkenhaus includes a version of "Through the Looking-Glass" in her "Plays for School Children" (Century). But somehow, in offering a play by a Chicago dramatist, who was educated at Bryn Mawr, and who has met success in the American theater with several distinctive one-act plays, I feel that, in her own love for Lewis Carroll, she is but representing a vast horde of Alice lovers in America.

ALICE IN WONDERLAND

*A DRAMATIZATION OF LEWIS CARROLL'S "ALICE'S
ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND" AND
"THROUGH THE LOOKING-GLASS"*

BY ALICE GERSTENBERG

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To the Memory of
LEWIS CARROLL

This dramatic rendering of "Alice in Wonderland" was produced by The Players Producing Company of Chicago (Aline Barnsdall and Arthur Bissell), at the Fine Arts Theater, Chicago, February 11, 1915. After a successful run it opened at the Booth Theater, New York, March 23, 1915.

The scenery and the costumes were designed by William Penhallow Henderson of Chicago.

The music was written by Eric De Lamarter of Chicago.

W. H. Gilmore staged the play with the following cast:

LEWIS CARROLL	Frank Stirling
ALICE	Vivian Tobin
RED QUEEN	Florence LeClercq
WHITE QUEEN	Mary Servoss
WHITE RABBIT	Donald Gallaher
HUMPTY DUMPTY	Alfred Donohoe
GRYPHON	Fred W. Permain
MOCK TURTLE	Geoffrey Stein
MAD HATTER	Geoffrey Stein
MARCH HARE	Fred W. Permain
DORMOUSE	J. Gunnis Davis
FROG FOOTMAN	Walter Kingsford
DUCHESS	Kenyon Bishop
CHESHIRE CAT	Alfred Donohoe
KING OF HEARTS	Frederick Annerly
QUEEN OF HEARTS	Winifred Hanley
KNAVE OF HEARTS	Foxhall Daingerfield
CATERPILLAR,	Walter Kingsford
TWO OF SPADES	Rule Pyott
FIVE OF SPADES	France Bendtsen
SEVEN OF SPADES	John A. Rice

THE SCENES

ACT I

SCENE I — Alice's Home.

SCENE II — The Room in the Looking-Glass.

SCENE III — The Hall with Doors.

SCENE IV — The Sea Shore

ACT II

SCENE — The March Hare's Garden.

ACT III

SCENE I — The Garden of Flowers.

SCENE II — The Court of Hearts.

SCENE III — Alice's Home.

The play calls for costumes after the illustrations of John Tenniel, and scenery of the simple imaginative type, the "new art" in the theater.

ALICE IN WONDERLAND

ACT I

SCENE I

Alice's home. Lewis Carroll is discovered, playing chess. Golden-haired Alice, in a little blue dress, a black kitten in her arms, stands watching him.

ALICE. That's a funny game, Uncle. What did you do then?

CARROLL. A red pawn took a white pawn; this way. You see, Alice, the chess-board is divided into sixty-four squares, red and white, and the white army tries to win and the red army tries to win. It's like a battle!

ALICE. With soldiers?

CARROLL. Yes, here are the Kings and Queens they are fighting for. That's the Red Queen and here's the White Queen.

ALICE. How funny they look!

CARROLL. See the crowns on their heads, and look at their big feet.

ALICE. It's a foot apiece, that's what it is! Do they hump along like this?

CARROLL. Here! You're spoiling the game. I must keep them all in their right squares.

ALICE. I want to be a Queen!

CARROLL. Here *you* are (*he points to a small white pawn*), here *you* are in your little stiff skirt!

ALICE. How do you do, Alice!

CARROLL. And now you are going to move here.

ALICE. Let me move myself.

CARROLL. When you have travelled all along the board this way and haven't been taken by the enemy you may be a Queen.

ALICE. Why do people always play with Kings and Queens? Mother has them in her playing cards too. Look! (*Alice goes to the mantel and takes a pack of playing cards from the ledge*) Here's the King of Hearts and here's his wife; she's the Queen of Hearts — isn't she cross-looking? wants to bite one's head off. (*Carroll moves a pawn*) You're playing against yourself, aren't you?

CARROLL. That's one way of keeping in practice, Alice; I have friends in the University who want to beat me.

ALICE. But if you play against yourself I should think you'd want to cheat!

CARROLL. Does a nice little girl like you cheat when she plays against herself?

ALICE. Oh! I *never* do! I'd scold myself hard. I always pretend I'm *two* people too. It's lots of fun, isn't it? Sometimes when I'm all alone I walk up to the looking-glass and talk to the other Alice. She's so silly, that Alice; she can't do anything by herself. She just mocks me all the time. When I laugh, she laughs; when I point my finger at her, she points her finger at me; and when I stick my tongue out at her she sticks her tongue out at me! Kitty has a twin too, haven't you darling?

[*Alice goes to the mirror to show Kitty her twin.*]

CARROLL. I'll have to write a book some day about Alice — Alice in wonderland, "Child of the pure unclouded brow and dreaming eyes of wonder!" or, Alice through the looking-glass!

ALICE. Don't you wish sometimes you could go into looking-glass house? See! (*Alice stands on an armchair and looks into the mirror*) There's the room you can see through the glass; it's just the same as our living-room here, only the things go the other way. I can see all of it — all but the bit just behind the fireplace. Oh! I do wish I could see that bit! I want so much to know if they've a fire there. You never *can* tell, you know, unless our fire smokes. Then smoke comes up in that room too — but that may be just to make it look as if they had a fire — just to pretend they had. The books are something like our books, only the

words go the wrong way. Won't there ever be any way of our getting through, Uncle?]

CARROLL. Do you think Kitty would find looking-glass milk digestible?

ALICE. It doesn't sound awful good, does it; but I might leave her at home. She's been into an awful lot of mischief to-day. She found sister's knitting and chased the ball all over the garden where sister was playing croquet with the neighbours. And I ran and ran after the naughty little thing until I was all out of breath and so tired! I am tired.

[She yawns and makes herself comfortable in the armchair.]

CARROLL *(replaces the playing cards on the mantel and consults his watch)*. Take a nap. Yes, you have time before tea.

ALICE *(half asleep)*. We're going to have mock-turtle soup for supper! I heard mamma tell the cook not to pepper it too much.

CARROLL. What a funny little rabbit it is, nibbling all the time! *[He leans gently over the back of her chair, and seeing that she is going to sleep puts out the lamplight and leaves the room. A red glow from the fireplace illumines Alice. Dream music. A bluish light reveals the Red Chess Queen and the White Chess Queen in the mirror.]*

RED QUEEN *(points to Alice and says in a mysterious voice)* There she is, — let's call her over.

WHITE QUEEN. Do you think she'll come?

RED QUEEN. I'll call softly, — Alice!

WHITE QUEEN. Hist, Alice.

RED QUEEN. Alice!

WHITE QUEEN. Hush — if she wakes and catches us —

BOTH QUEENS. Alice, come through into looking-glass house! *[Their hands beckon her.]*

ALICE *(Rises, and talks sleepily. The Queens disappear. Alice climbs from the arm of the chair to the back of another and so on up to the mantel ledge, where she picks her way daintily between the vases)*. I — don't — know — how — I — can — get — through. I've tried — before — but the glass was hard — and I was afraid of cutting — my fingers — *(She*

feels the glass and is amazed to find it like gauze) Why, it's soft like gauze; it's turning into a sort of mist; why, it's easy to get through! *Why — why — I'm going through!*
[*She disappears.*]

SCENE II

Is Scene I, reversed. The portières are black and red squares, like a chess-board. A soft radiance follows the characters mysteriously. As the curtain rises, Alice comes through the looking-glass; steps down, looks about in wonderment, and goes to see if there is a "fire." The Red Queen rises out of the grate and faces her haughtily.

ALICE. Why, you're the Red Queen!

RED QUEEN. Of course I am! Where do you come from? And where are you going? Look up, speak nicely, and don't twiddle your fingers!

ALICE. I only wanted to see what the looking-glass was like. Perhaps I've lost my way.

RED QUEEN. I don't know what you mean by your way; all the ways about here belong to *me*. Curtsey while you're thinking what to say. It saves time.

ALICE. I'll try it when I go home; — the next time I'm a little late for dinner.

RED QUEEN. It's time for you to answer now; open your mouth a *little* wider when you speak, and always say, "Your Majesty." I suppose you don't want to lose your name?

ALICE. No, indeed!

RED QUEEN. And yet I don't know, only think how convenient it would be if you could manage to go home without it! For instance, if the governess wanted to call you to your lessons, she would call out "come here," and there she would have to leave off, because there wouldn't be any name for her to call, and of course you wouldn't have to go, you know.

ALICE. That would never do, I'm sure; the governess would never think of excusing me from lessons for that. If she couldn't remember my name, she'd call me "Miss," as the servants do.

RED QUEEN. Well, if she said "Miss," and didn't say anything more, of course you'd miss your lessons. I dare say you can't even read this book.

ALICE. It's all in some language I don't know. Why, it's a looking-glass book, of course! And if I hold it up to a glass, the words will all go the right way again.

Jabberwocky

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

It seems very pretty, but it's *rather* hard to understand; somehow it seems to fill my head with ideas — only I don't exactly know what they are.

RED QUEEN. I dare say you don't know your geography either. Look at the map!

[She takes a right angle course to the portières and points to them with her sceptre.]

ALICE. It's marked out just like a big chess-board. I wouldn't mind being a pawn, though of course I should like to be a Red Queen best.

RED QUEEN. That's easily managed. When you get to the eighth square you'll be a Queen. It's a huge game of chess that's being played — all over the world. Come on, we've got to run. Faster, don't try to talk.

ALICE. I can't.

RED QUEEN. Faster, faster.

ALICE. Are we nearly there?

RED QUEEN. Nearly there! Why, we passed it ten minutes ago. Faster. You may rest a little now.

ALICE. Why, I do believe we're in the same place. Everything's just as it was.

RED QUEEN. Of course it is; what would you have it?

ALICE. Well, in our country you'd generally get to somewhere else — if you ran very fast for a long time as we've been doing.

RED QUEEN. A slow sort of country. Now *here* you see, it takes all the running *you* can do, to keep in the same place. If you want to get somewhere else, you must run at least twice as fast as that.

ALICE. I'd rather not try, please! I'm quite content to stay here — only I *am* so hot and thirsty.

RED QUEEN. I know what you'd like. (*She takes a little box out of her pocket*) Have a biscuit?

[*Alice, not liking to refuse, curtseys as she takes the biscuit and chokes.*]

RED QUEEN. While you're refreshing yourself, I'll just take the measurements. (*She takes a ribbon out of her pocket and measures the map with it*) At the end of two yards I shall give you your directions — have another biscuit?

ALICE. No thank you, one's quite enough.

RED QUEEN. Thirst quenched, I hope? At the end of three yards I shall repeat them — for fear of your forgetting them. At the end of *four*, I shall say good-bye. And at the end of five, I shall go! That Square belongs to Humpty Dumpty and that Square to the Gryphon and Mock Turtle and that Square to the Queen of Hearts. But you make no remark?

ALICE. I — I didn't know I had to make one — just then.

RED QUEEN. You *should* have said, "It's extremely kind of you to tell me all this"; — however, we'll suppose it said. Four! Good-bye! Five!

[*Red Queen vanishes in a gust of wind behind the portières. Rabbit music. White Rabbit comes out of the fireplace and walks about the room hurriedly. He wears a checked coat, carries white kid gloves in one hand, a fan in the other, and takes out his watch to look at it anxiously.*]

WHITE RABBIT. Oh, the Duchess! the Duchess! Oh! won't she be savage if I've kept her waiting!

ALICE. I've never seen a rabbit with a waistcoat and a watch! And a waistcoat pocket! If you please, sir ——

WHITE RABBIT. Oh!

[*He drops fan and gloves in fright, and dashes out by way of*]

the portières, in a gust of wind. Alice picks up the fan and playfully puts on the gloves. The portières flap in the breeze and a shawl flies in.

ALICE (*catches the shawl and looks about for the owner; then meets the White Queen*). I'm very glad I happened to be in the way.

WHITE QUEEN (*runs in wildly, both arms stretched out wide as if she were flying, and cries in a helpless, frightened way*). Bread-and-butter, bread-and-butter.

ALICE. Am I addressing the White Queen?

WHITE QUEEN. Well, yes, if you call that a-dressing. It isn't my notion of the thing, at all.

ALICE. If your Majesty will only tell me the right way to begin, I'll do it as well as I can.

WHITE QUEEN. But I don't want it done at all. I've been a-dressing myself for the last two hours.

ALICE. Every single thing's crooked, and you're all over pins; may I put your shawl straight for you?

WHITE QUEEN. I don't know what's the matter with it! It's out of temper. I've pinned it here, and I've pinned it there, but there's no pleasing it.

ALICE. It *can't* go straight, you know, if you pin it all on one side, and dear me, what a state your hair is in!

WHITE QUEEN. The brush has got entangled in it! And I lost the comb yesterday.

ALICE (*takes out the brush and arranges the Queen's hair*). You look better now! But really you should have a lady's maid!

WHITE QUEEN. I'm sure I'll take you with pleasure. Two pence a week and jam every other day.

ALICE (*who cannot help laughing*). I don't want you to hire *me* — and I don't care for jam.

WHITE QUEEN. It's very good jam.

ALICE. Well, I don't want any to-day, at any rate.

WHITE QUEEN. You couldn't have it if you *did* want it. The rule is, jam to-morrow and jam yesterday — but never jam to-day.

ALICE. It must come sometimes to "jam to-day."

WHITE QUEEN. No, it can't, — it's jam every *other* day; to-day isn't any *other* day, you know.

ALICE. I don't understand you, — it's dreadfully confusing!

WHITE QUEEN. That's the effect of living backwards, — it always makes one a little giddy at first —

ALICE. Living backwards! I never heard of such a thing!

WHITE QUEEN. But there's one great advantage in it — that one's memory works both ways.

ALICE. I'm sure *mine* only works one way. I can't remember things before they happen.

WHITE QUEEN. It's a poor sort of memory that only works backwards.

ALICE. What sort of things do you remember best?

WHITE QUEEN. Oh, things that happened the week after next.

For instance now: (*She sticks a large piece of plaster on her finger*) There's the King's messenger — he's in prison being punished; and the trial doesn't even begin till next Wednesday; and of course the crime comes last of all.

ALICE. Suppose he never commits the crime?

WHITE QUEEN (*binding the plaster with ribbon*). That would be all the better, wouldn't it?

ALICE. Of course it would be all the better, but it wouldn't be all the better his being punished.

WHITE QUEEN. You're wrong *there*, at any rate; were *you* ever punished?

ALICE. Only for faults.

WHITE QUEEN. And you were all the better for it, I know!

ALICE. Yes, but then I *had* done the things I was punished for; that makes all the difference.

WHITE QUEEN. But if you hadn't done them that would have been better still; better and better and better!

ALICE. There's a mistake somewhere —

WHITE QUEEN (*screams like an engine whistle, and shakes her hand*). Oh, Oh, Oh! My finger's bleeding. Oh, Oh, Oh!

ALICE. What *is* the matter? Have you pricked your finger?

WHITE QUEEN. I haven't pricked it yet — but I soon shall — Oh, Oh, Oh!

ALICE. When do you expect to do it?

WHITE QUEEN. When I fasten my shawl again; the brooch will come undone directly. Oh, oh!

[*Brooch flies open and she clutches it wildly.*]

ALICE. Take care! you're holding it all crooked!

WHITE QUEEN (*pricks her finger and smiles*). That accounts for the bleeding, you see; now you understand the way things happen here.

ALICE. But why don't you scream now?

WHITE QUEEN. Why, I've done all the screaming already. What would be the good of having it all over again? Oh! it's time to run if you want to stay in the same place! Come on!

ALICE. No, no! Not so fast! I'm getting dizzy!!

WHITE QUEEN. Faster, faster!

ALICE. Everything's black before my eyes!

[*There is music, and the sound of rushing wind, and in the darkness the White Queen cries: "Faster, faster"; Alice gasps: "I can't — please stop"; and the Queen replies: "Then you can't stay in the same place. I'll have to drop you behind. Faster — faster, good-bye."*]

SCENE III

When the curtain rises one sees nothing but odd black lanterns with orange lights, hanging, presumably, from the sky. The scene lights up, slowly revealing Alice seated on two large cushions. She has been "dropped behind" by the White Queen, and is dazed to find herself in a strange hall, with many peculiar doors, and knobs too high to reach.

ALICE. Oh! my head! Where am I? Oh dear, Oh dear! (*She staggers up and to her amazement finds herself smaller than the table*) I've never been smaller than any table before! I've always been able to reach the knobs! What a curious feeling. Oh! I'm shrinking. It's the fan — the gloves! (*She throws them away, feels her head and measures herself against table and doors*) Oh! saved in time! But I never — never —

WHITE RABBIT. Oh! my fan and gloves! Where *are* my ——

ALICE. Oh! Mr. Rabbit — please help me out — I want to go home — I want to go home ——

WHITE RABBIT. Oh! the Duchess! Oh! my fur and whiskers! She'll get me executed, as sure as ferrets are ferrets! Oh *you* have them!

ALICE. I'm sorry — you dropped them, you know ——

WHITE RABBIT (*picks up fan and gloves and patters off*). She'll chop off your head!

ALICE. If you please, sir — where am I? — won't you please — tell me how to get out — I want to get out ——

WHITE RABBIT (*looking at his watch*). Oh! my ears and whiskers, how late it's getting!

[*A trap-door gives way and Rabbit disappears. Alice dashes after, only in time to have the trap-door bang in her face.*]

ALICE (*amazed*). It's a rabbit-hole — I'm small enough to fit it too! If I shrink any more it might end in my going out altogether like a candle. I wonder what I would be like then! What does the flame of a candle look like after the candle is blown out? I've never seen such a thing!

HUMPTY DUMPTY (*sits on the wall*). Don't stand chattering to yourself like that, but tell me your name and your business.

ALICE. My name is Alice, but ——

HUMPTY DUMPTY. It's a stupid name enough, — what does it mean?

ALICE. *Must* a name mean something?

HUMPTY DUMPTY. Of course it must; *my* name means the shape I am — and a good, handsome shape it is, too. With a name like yours, you might be any shape, almost.

ALICE. You're Humpty Dumpty! Just like an egg.

HUMPTY DUMPTY. It's *very* provoking, to be called an egg — *very*.

ALICE. I said you *looked* like an egg, sir, and some eggs are very pretty, you know.

HUMPTY DUMPTY. Some people have no more sense than a baby.

ALICE. Why do you sit here all alone?

HUMPTY DUMPTY. Why, because there's nobody with me. Did you think I didn't know the answer to *that*? Ask another.

ALICE. Don't you think you'd be safer down on the ground? That wall's so very narrow.

HUMPTY DUMPTY. What tremendously easy riddles you ask! Of course I don't think so. Take a good look at me! I'm one that has spoken to a king, I am; to show you I'm not proud, you may shake hands with me! (*He leans forward to offer Alice his hand, but she is too small to reach it*) However, this conversation is going on a little too fast; let's go back to the last remark but one.

ALICE. I'm afraid I can't remember it.

HUMPTY DUMPTY. In that case we start fresh, and it's my turn to choose a subject.

ALICE. You talk about it just as if it were a game.

HUMPTY DUMPTY. So here's a question for you. How old did you say you were?

ALICE. Seven years and six months.

HUMPTY DUMPTY. Wrong! You never said a word about it. Now, if you'd asked *my* advice, I'd have said, "Leave off at seven — but ——"

ALICE. I never ask advice about growing.

HUMPTY DUMPTY. Too proud?

ALICE. What a beautiful belt you've got on. At least, a beautiful cravat, I should have said — no, a belt, I mean — I beg your pardon. If only I knew which was neck and which was waist.

HUMPTY DUMPTY. It is a — *most* — *provoking* — thing, when a person doesn't know a cravat from a belt.

ALICE. I know it's very ignorant of me.

HUMPTY DUMPTY. It's a cravat, child, and a beautiful one, as you say. There's glory for you.

ALICE. I don't know what you mean by "glory."

HUMPTY DUMPTY. When I use a word, it means just what I choose it to mean — neither more nor less.

ALICE. The question is, whether you *can* make words mean different things.

HUMPTY DUMPTY. The question is, which is to be master — that's all. Impenetrability! That's what I say!

ALICE. Would you tell me, please, what that means?

HUMPTY DUMPTY. I meant by "impenetrability" that we've had enough of that subject, and it would be just as well if you'd mention what you mean to do next, as I suppose you don't mean to stop here all the rest of your life.

ALICE. That's a great deal to make one word mean.

HUMPTY DUMPTY. When I make a word do a lot of work like that I always pay it extra.

ALICE. Oh!

HUMPTY DUMPTY. Ah, you should see 'em come round me of a Saturday night, for to get their wages, you know. That's all — Good-bye.

ALICE. Good-bye till we meet again.

HUMPTY DUMPTY. I shouldn't know you again, if we *did* meet, you're so exactly like other people.

ALICE. The face is what one goes by, generally.

HUMPTY DUMPTY. That's just what I complain of. Your face is the same as everybody has — the two eyes — so — nose in the middle, mouth under. It's always the same. Now, if you had the two eyes on the same side of the nose, for instance — or the mouth at the top — that would be *some* help.

ALICE. It wouldn't look nice.

HUMPTY DUMPTY. Wait till you've tried! Good-bye.

[He disappears as he came.]

ALICE. Oh! I forgot to ask him how to — *(She tries to open the doors. They are all locked; she begins to weep. She walks weeping to a high glass table, and sits down on its lower ledge. She sits on a big golden key and picks it up in surprise. She tries it on all the doors but it does not fit. She weeps and weeps — and Wonderland grows dark to her in her despair. In the darkness she cries, "Oh! I'm slipping! Oh, oh! it's a lake. Oh! my tears! I'm floating!" A mysterious light shows a "Drink me" sign around a bottle on the top of the table. Alice floats up to it, panting, and holding on to the edge of the table*

takes up the bottle) It isn't marked poison. (*She sips at it*) This is good! Tastes like cherry tart, custard, pineapple, roast turkey, toffy and hot buttered toast — all together. Oh! Oh! I'm letting out like a telescope. (*A mysterious light shows her lengthening out. Music*) But the lake is rising, too. Oh! Oh! it's deep! I'm drowning. Help, help, I'm drowning, I'm drowning in my tears!

GRYPHON. Hjckrrh. Hjckrrh!

[*The Gryphon, a huge green creature, with big glittering wings, appears where Humpty Dumpty had been, and reaches glittering claws over to grab and save Alice.*]

SCENE IV

Is symbolic of a wet and rocky shore in a weird green light. The Mock Turtle is weeping dismally.

GRYPHON. Hjckrrh. Hjckrrh. Hjckrrh.

MOCK TURTLE (*answers with his weeping*).

GRYPHON (*drags Alice in*). Drop your tears into the sea with his.

ALICE. He sobs as if he had a bone in his throat. He sighs as if his heart would break. What is his sorrow?

MOCK TURTLE. Oh, Gryphon, it's terrible!

GRYPHON. It's all his fancy that. Mock Turtle hasn't got no sorrow. This here young lady, she wants for to know your history, she do.

MOCK TURTLE. I'll tell it her. Sit down, both of you, and don't speak a word till I've finished.

ALICE. I don't see how you can *ever* finish, if you don't begin.

MOCK TURTLE. Once, I was a real Turtle. (*A long silence is broken only by the exclamations, "Hjckrrh," of the Gryphon, and the heavy sobbing of the Mock Turtle*) When we were little, we went to school in the sea. The master was an old Turtle — we used to call him Tortoise —

ALICE. Why did you call him Tortoise, if he wasn't one?

MOCK TURTLE. We called him Tortoise because he taught us; really you are very dull.

GRYPHON. You ought to be ashamed of yourself for asking such a simple question. Drive on, old fellow! Don't be all day about it!

MOCK TURTLE. Yes, we went to school in the sea, tho' you mayn't believe it ——

ALICE. I never said I didn't.

MOCK TURTLE. You did.

GRYPHON. Hold your tongue!

MOCK TURTLE. We had the best of educations — in fact, we went to school every day.

ALICE. I've been to a day school, too; you needn't be so proud as all that.

MOCK TURTLE. With extras?

ALICE. Yes, we learned French and music.

MOCK TURTLE. And washing?

ALICE. Certainly not!

MOCK TURTLE. Ah! Then yours wasn't a really good school. Now at *ours* they had at the end of the bill, French, music, *and washing* — extra.

ALICE. You couldn't have wanted it much; living at the bottom of the sea.

MOCK TURTLE. I couldn't afford to learn it, — I only took the regular course.

ALICE. What was that?

MOCK TURTLE. Reeling and writhing, of course, to begin with, — and then the different branches of Arithmetic — Ambition, Distraction, Uglification, and Derision.

ALICE. I never heard of Uglification. What is it?

GRYPHON. Never heard of uglifying! You know what to beautify is, I suppose?

ALICE. Yes, it means — to — make — anything — prettier.

GRYPHON. Well, then, if you don't know what to uglify is, you *are* a simpleton.

ALICE. What else had you to learn?

MOCK TURTLE. Well, there was Mystery; Mystery, ancient and modern, with Seaography, then Drawling — the Drawling-master was an old conger-eel, that used to come once a

week; what *he* taught us was Drawling, Stretching, and Fainting in Coils.

ALICE. What was *that* like?

MOCK TURTLE. Well, I can't show it you, myself. I'm too stiff. And the Gryphon never learned it.

GRYPHON. Hadn't time; I went to the Classical master, though. He was an old crab, *he* was.

MOCK TURTLE. I never went to him; he taught Laughing and Grief, they used to say.

GRYPHON. So he did, so he did.

ALICE. And how many hours a day did you do lessons?

MOCK TURTLE. Ten hours the first day, nine the next, and so on.

ALICE. What a curious plan!

GRYPHON. That's the reason they're called lessons, because they lessen from day to day.

ALICE. Then the eleventh day must have been a holiday?

MOCK TURTLE. Of course it was.

ALICE. And how did you manage on the twelfth?

GRYPHON. That's enough about lessons, — tell her something about the games now. (*Mock Turtle sighs deeply, draws back of one flapper across his eyes. He looks at Alice and tries to speak, but sobs choke his voice. Gryphon punches him in the back*) Same as if he had a bone in his throat.

MOCK TURTLE (*with tears running down his cheeks*). You may not have lived much under the sea —

ALICE. I haven't.

MOCK TURTLE. And perhaps you were never even introduced to a lobster.

ALICE. I once tasted — no, never!

MOCK TURTLE. So you can have no idea what a delightful thing a Lobster Quadrille is.

ALICE. No, indeed. What sort of a dance is it?

GRYPHON. Why, you first form into a line along the seashore.

MOCK TURTLE. Two lines; seals, turtles, salmon, and so on: then, when you've cleared all the jellyfish out of the way —

GRYPHON. *That* generally takes some time.

MOCK TURTLE. You advance twice ——

GRYPHON. Each with a lobster as a partner.

MOCK TURTLE. Of course, advance twice, set to partners.

GRYPHON. Change lobsters, and retire in same order.

MOCK TURTLE. Then you know, you throw the ——

GRYPHON. The lobsters!

MOCK TURTLE. As far out to sea as you can ——

GRYPHON. Swim after them!

MOCK TURTLE. Turn a somersault in the sea.

GRYPHON. Change lobsters again!

MOCK TURTLE. Back to land again, and — that's all the first figure.

ALICE. It must be a very pretty dance.

MOCK TURTLE. Would you like to see a little of it?

ALICE. Very much indeed.

MOCK TURTLE. Come, let's try the first figure. We can do it without lobsters, you know; which shall sing?

GRYPHON. Oh, *you* sing, — I've forgotten the words.

[Creatures solemnly dance round and round Alice, treading on her toes, waving fore-paws to mark time, while Mock Turtle sings.]

First Verse

"Will you walk a little faster!" said a whiting to a snail,

"There's a porpoise close behind us, and he's treading on my tail.

See how eagerly the lobsters and the turtles all advance!

They are waiting on the shingle — will you come and join the dance?

Will you, won't you, will you, won't you, will you join the dance?

Will you, won't you, will you, won't you, won't you join the dance?

Second Verse

"You can really have no notion how delightful it will be

When they take us up and throw us, with the lobsters, out to sea!"

But the snail replied, "Too far, too far!" and gave a look askance —

Said he thanked the whiting kindly, but he would not join the dance.

Would not, could not, would not, could not, would not join the dance.

Would not, could not, would not, could not, could not join the dance.

[The Creatures dance against Alice, pushing her back and forth between them. She protests and finally escapes; they bump against each other.]

ALICE. Thank you; it's a very interesting dance to watch, and I do so like that curious song about the whiting.

MOCK TURTLE. Oh, as to the whiting, they — you've seen them, of course?

ALICE. Yes, I've often seen them at din —

[Checks herself hastily.]

MOCK TURTLE. I don't know where Din may be, but if you've seen them so often, of course you know what they're like.

ALICE. I believe so, — they have their tails in their mouths — and they're all over crumbs.

MOCK TURTLE. You're wrong about the crumbs, — crumbs would all wash off in the sea. But they *have* their tails in their mouths; and the reason is ——— *(Mock Turtle yawns and shuts his eyes)* Tell her about the reason and all that.

GRYPHON. The reason is, that they *would* go with the lobsters to the dance. So they got thrown out to sea. So they had to fall a long way. So they got their tails fast in their mouths. So they couldn't get them out again. That's all.

ALICE. Thank you, it's very interesting. I never knew so much about a whiting before.

GRYPHON. I can tell you more than that, if you like. Do you know why it's called a whiting?

ALICE. I never thought about it. Why?

GRYPHON. *It does the boots and shoes.*

ALICE. Does the boots and shoes!

GRYPHON. Why, what are *your* shoes done with? I mean, what makes them so shiny?

ALICE. They're done with blacking, I believe.

GRYPHON. Boots and shoes, under the sea, are done with whiting. Now you know.

ALICE. And what are they made of?

GRYPHON. Soles and eels, of course; any shrimp could have told you that.

ALICE. If I'd been the whiting, I'd have said to the porpoise, "Keep back, please; we don't want *you* with us."

MOCK TURTLE. They were obliged to have him with them, — no wise fish would go anywhere without a porpoise.

ALICE. Wouldn't it really?

MOCK TURTLE. Of course not; why, if a fish came to me and told me he was going a journey, I should say, "With what porpoise?"

ALICE. Don't you mean purpose?

MOCK TURTLE. I mean what I say.

GRYPHON. Shall we try another figure of the Lobster Quadrille? Or would you like the Mock Turtle to sing you a song?

ALICE. Oh, a song, please, if the Mock Turtle would be so kind.

GRYPHON. Um! No accounting for tastes! Sing her "Turtle Soup," will you, old fellow?

MOCK TURTLE (*sighs deeply and, sometimes choked with sobs, sings*).

"Beautiful Soup, so rich and green,
Waiting in a hot tureen!
Who for such dainties would not stoop?
Soup of the evening, beautiful Soup!
Soup of the evening, beautiful Soup!
Beau — ootiful Soo — op,
Beau — ootiful Soo — oop,
Soo — oop of the e-e-evening,
Beautiful, beautiful Soup."

WHITE RABBIT (*enters, stretching out a red and white checked sash with which he separates Alice from the Creatures*). Check!

MOCK TURTLE. They won't let her stay in our square.

WHITE RABBIT. The Queen is coming this way.

GRYPHON. She'll chop our heads off. Come on, come on, let's fly!

[*The Mock Turtle and Gryphon grab Alice and fly into the air.*]

CURTAIN

[*The Curtain rises to reveal small silhouettes of the Gryphon, Mock Turtle, and Alice in an orange-coloured moon far away in the sky. Down below the White Rabbit is shouting to them, "You'll be safe in the March Hare's garden."*]

CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE. *The March Hare's garden, showing part of the Duchess' house. On a small platform there is a tea table, set with many cups, continuing into wings to give impression of limitless length. The March Hare, Hatter, and Dormouse are crowded at one end. Alice sits on the ground, where she has been dropped from the sky. Finding herself not bruised, she rises and approaches the table.*

MARCH HARE AND HATTER. No room! No room!

ALICE. There's plenty of room! (*She sits in a large armchair at one end of the table*) I don't know who you are.

MARCH HARE. I am the March Hare, that's the Hatter, and this is the Dormouse. Have some wine?

ALICE. I don't see any wine.

MARCH HARE. There isn't any.

ALICE. Then it wasn't very civil of you to offer it.

MARCH HARE. It wasn't very civil of you to sit down without being invited.

ALICE. I didn't know it was *your* table; it's laid for a great many more than three.

HATTER. Your hair wants cutting.

ALICE. You should learn not to make personal remarks; it's very rude.

HATTER. Why is a raven like a writing-desk?

ALICE. Come, we shall have some fun now! I'm glad you've begun asking riddles — I believe I can guess that.

MARCH HARE. So you mean that you think you can find out the answer to it?

ALICE. Exactly so.

MARCH HARE. Then you should say what you mean.

ALICE. I do; at least — at least I mean what I say — that's the same thing, you know.

HATTER. Not the same thing a bit! Why, you might just as well say that "I see what I eat" is the same thing as "I eat what I see!"

MARCH HARE. You might just as well say that "I like what I get," is the same thing as "I get what I like."

DORMOUSE. You might just as well say that "I breathe when I sleep" is the same thing as "I sleep when I breathe."

HATTER. It is the same thing with you. (*Takes out his watch looks at it uneasily, shakes it, holds it to his ear*) What day of the month is it?

ALICE. The fourth.

HATTER. Two days wrong. I told you butter wouldn't suit the works!

MARCH HARE. It was the *best* butter.

HATTER. Yes, but some crumbs must have got in as well — you shouldn't have put it in with the bread-knife —

MARCH HARE (*takes the watch, looks at it gloomily, dips it into his cup of tea, and looks at it again, but doesn't know what else to say*). It was the *best* butter, you know.

ALICE. What a funny watch! It tells the day of the month and doesn't tell what o'clock it is.

HATTER. Why should it? Does *your* watch tell you what year it is?

ALICE. Of course not, but that's because it stays the same year for such a long time together.

HATTER. Which is just the case with *mine*.

ALICE. I don't quite understand you. What you said had no sort of meaning in it and yet it was certainly English.

HATTER (*pouring some hot tea on the Dormouse's nose*). The Dormouse is asleep again.

DORMOUSE. Of course, of course, just what I was going to remark myself.

HATTER. Have you guessed the riddle yet?

ALICE. No, I give it up, — what's the answer?

HATTER. I haven't the slightest idea.

MARCH HARE. Nor I.

ALICE. I think you might do something better with the time, than wasting it in asking riddles that have no answers.

HATTER. If you knew Time as well as I do, you wouldn't talk about wasting *it*. It's *him*.

ALICE. I don't know what you mean.

HATTER. Of course you don't. I dare say you never even spoke to Time.

ALICE. Perhaps not, but I know I have to beat time when I learn music.

HATTER. Ah, that accounts for it. He won't stand beating. Now, if you only kept on good terms with him, he'd do almost anything you liked with the clock. For instance, suppose it were nine o'clock in the morning, just time to begin lessons. You'd only have to whisper a hint to Time, and round goes the clock in a twinkling! Half past one, time for dinner.

MARCH HARE. I only wish it was.

ALICE. That would be grand, certainly, but then — I shouldn't be hungry for it, you know.

HATTER. Not at first, perhaps, but you could keep it to half past one as long as you liked.

ALICE. Is that the way *you* manage?

HATTER. Not I, — we quarrelled last March — just before *he* went mad, you know. It was at the great concert given by the Queen of Hearts, and I had to sing —

“Twinkle, twinkle, little bat!
How I wonder what you’re at!”

You know the song, perhaps.

ALICE. I’ve heard something like it.

DORMOUSE. Twinkle, twinkle, twinkle ——

HATTER. Well, I’d hardly finished the first verse when the Queen bawled out, “He’s murdering the time! Off with his head!”

ALICE. How dreadfully savage!

HATTER. And ever since that, he won’t do a thing I ask!
It’s always six o’clock now.

ALICE. Is that the reason so many tea-things are put out here?

HATTER. Yes, that’s it; it’s always tea time, and we’ve no time to wash the things between whiles.

ALICE. Then you keep moving round, I suppose?

HATTER. Exactly so, as the things get used up.

ALICE. But when you come to the beginning again?

MARCH HARE. Suppose we change the subject. I vote the young lady tells us a story.

ALICE. I’m afraid I don’t know one.

MARCH HARE AND HATTER. Then the Dormouse shall. Wake up, Dormouse.

[They pinch him on both sides at once.]

DORMOUSE (*opens his eyes slowly and says, in a hoarse, feeble voice*). I wasn’t asleep; I heard every word you fellows were saying.

MARCH HARE. Tell us a story.

ALICE. Yes, please do!

HATTER. And be quick about it, or you’ll be asleep again before it’s done.

DORMOUSE. Once upon a time there were three little sisters, and their names were Elsie, Lacie, and Tillie, and they lived at the bottom of a well ——

ALICE. What did they live on?

DORMOUSE. They lived on treacle.

ALICE. They couldn't have done that, you know, — they'd have been ill.

DORMOUSE. So they were, *very* ill.

ALICE. But why did they live at the bottom of a well?

MARCH HARE. Take some more tea.

ALICE. I've had nothing yet, so I can't take more.

HATTER. You mean, you can't take *less*; it's very easy to take *more* than nothing.

ALICE. Nobody asked *your* opinion.

HATTER. Who's making personal remarks now?

ALICE (*helps herself to tea and bread and butter*). Why did they live at the bottom of a well?

DORMOUSE (*takes a minute or two to think*). It was a treacle-well.

ALICE. There's no such a thing!

HATTER AND MARCH HARE. Sh! Sh!

DORMOUSE. If you can't be civil, you'd better finish the story for yourself.

ALICE (*very humbly*). No, please go on. I won't interrupt you again. I dare say there may be *one*.

DORMOUSE. One, indeed! And so these three little sisters — they were learning to draw, you know —

ALICE. What did they draw?

DORMOUSE. Treacle.

HATTER. I want a clean cup. Let's all move one place on.

[*Hatter moves on, Dormouse takes his place, March Hare takes Dormouse's place, and Alice unwillingly takes March Hare's place.*]

ALICE. I'm worse off than I was before. You've upset the milk jug into your plate.

MARCH HARE. It wasn't very civil of you to sit down without being invited.

ALICE. Where did they draw the treacle from?

HATTER. You can draw water out of a water-well, so I should think you could draw treacle out of a treacle-well — eh? stupid?

ALICE. But they were *in* the well.

DORMOUSE. Of course they were — well in. They were learning to draw, and they drew all manner of things — everything that begins with an M ——

ALICE. Why with an M?

MARCH HARE. Why not?

[*Alice is silent and confused. Hatter pinches Dormouse to wake him up.*

DORMOUSE (*wakes with a little shriek and continues*). —— that begins with an M, such as mouse-traps and the moon and memory and muchness — you know you say things are “much of a muchness” — did you ever see such a thing as a drawing of a muchness?

HATTER. Did you?

ALICE. Really, now you ask me, I don't think ——

HATTER. Then you shouldn't talk.

MARCH HARE. No!

ALICE (*rises and walks away*). You are very rude. It's the stupidest tea party I ever was at in all my life ——

[*White Rabbit enters, carrying a huge envelope with a seal and crown on it.*

MARCH HARE AND HATTER. No room! no room!

[*Rabbit pays no attention to them but goes to the house and raps loudly. A Footman in livery, with a round face and large eyes like a frog, and powdered hair, opens the door.*

WHITE RABBIT. For the Duchess. An invitation from the Queen to play croquet.

FROG. From the Queen. An invitation for the Duchess to play croquet.

[*White Rabbit bows and goes out.*

MARCH HARE AND HATTER (*to White Rabbit*). No room! No room! No room!

[*The Frog disappears into the house, but leaves the door open. There is a terrible din, and many saucepans fly out.*

MARCH HARE. She's at it again.

HATTER. It's perfectly disgusting.

MARCH HARE. Let's move on.

[*The platform moves off with table, chairs, March Hare, Hatter.*



ALICE IN WONDERLAND

Act II.

Frog. — "I shall sit here, till to-morrow." (*The door opens and a large plate skims out straight at the Frog's head.*)

and Dormouse. *Meanwhile, the Frog has come out again and is sitting near the closed door, staring stupidly at the sky. Alice goes to the door timidly and knocks.*

FROG. There's no sort of use in knocking, and that for two reasons: first, because I'm on the same side of the door as you are; secondly, because they're making such a noise inside, no one could possibly hear you.

ALICE. Please then, how am I to get in?

FROG. There might be some sense in your knocking if we had the door between us. For instance, if you were *inside*, you might knock, and I could let you out, you know.

ALICE. How am I to get in?

FROG. I shall sit here, till to-morrow. (*The door opens and a large plate skims out straight at the Frog's head; it grazes his nose and breaks into pieces. Frog acts as if nothing had happened*) Or next day, maybe.

ALICE. How am I to get in?

FROG. *Are you to get in at all?* That's the first question, you know.

ALICE. It's really dreadful the way all you creatures argue. It's enough to drive one crazy.

FROG. I shall sit here, on and off, for days and days.

ALICE. But what am I to do?

FROG. Anything you like.

[*He begins to whistle.*]

ALICE. Where's the servant whose business it is to answer the door?

FROG. Which door?

ALICE. *This door, of course!*

[*The Frog looks at the door, and rubs his thumb on it to see if the paint will come off.*]

FROG. To answer the door? What's it been asking for?

ALICE. I don't know what you mean.

FROG. I speaks English, doesn't I? Or are you deaf? What did it ask you?

ALICE. Nothing! I've been knocking at it.

FROG. Shouldn't do that — shouldn't do that, — vexes it, you

know. (*He kicks the door*) You let it alone, and it'll let you alone, you know.

ALICE. Oh, there's no use talking to you —

[*She starts to open the door just as the Duchess comes out carrying a pig in baby's clothes. She sneezes — Frog sneezes and Alice sneezes.*]

DUCHESS. If everybody minded her own business —

[*She sneezes.*]

ALICE. It's pepper.

DUCHESS. Of course, my cook puts it in the soup.

ALICE. There's certainly too much pepper in the soup.

DUCHESS. Sneeze then and get rid of it! (*Duchess begins to sing to the Baby, giving it a violent shake at the end of every line of the lullaby*)

“Speak roughly to your little boy,
And beat him when he sneezes;

(*Frog and Alice sneeze*)

He only does it to annoy,
Because he knows it teases.

(*Duchess sneezes, Frog sneezes, Alice sneezes*)

I speak severely to my boy,
I beat him when he sneezes;

(*Frog sneezes, Alice sneezes*)

For he can thoroughly enjoy
The pepper when he pleases!”

Duchess sneezes, Frog sneezes, Alice sneezes; Duchess gasps and gives a tremendous sneeze.

ALICE. Oh dear! (*She jumps aside as kettles and pots come flying out of the door. The Duchess pays no attention*) What a cook to have! (*She calls inside*) Oh! please mind what you're doing! (*Another pan comes out and almost hits the Baby*) Oh! there goes his precious nose!

DUCHESS. If everybody minded her own business, the world would go round a deal faster than it does.

ALICE. Which would not be an advantage. Just think what work it would make with the day and night! You see the earth takes twenty-four hours to turn round on its axis ——

DUCHESS. Talking of axes, chop off her head!

[*The head of a grinning Cheshire cat appears in a tree above a wall.*]

ALICE. Oh, what's that?

DUCHESS. Cat, of course.

ALICE. Why does it grin like that?

DUCHESS. It's a Cheshire cat! and that's why. (*To Baby*) Pig!

ALICE. I didn't know that Cheshire cats always grinned; in fact, I didn't know that cats *could* grin.

DUCHESS. They all can and most of 'em do.

ALICE. I don't know of any that do.

DUCHESS. You don't know much and that's a fact. Here, you may nurse it a bit, if you like! (*Flings the Baby at Alice*) I must go and get ready to play croquet with the Queen.

[*She goes into the house.*]

ALICE. If I don't take this child away with me, they're sure to kill it in a day or two. Cheshire Puss, would you tell me, please, which way I ought to walk from here?

CAT. That depends a good deal on where you want to get to.

ALICE. I don't much care where ——

CAT. Then it doesn't matter which way you walk.

ALICE. So long as I get *somewhere*.

CAT. Oh, you're sure to do that, if you only walk long enough.

ALICE. Please, will you tell me what sort of people live about here?

CAT. All mad people.

ALICE. But I don't want to go among mad people.

CAT. Oh, you can't help that; we're all mad here. I'm mad. He's mad. He's dreaming now, and what do you think he's dreaming about?

ALICE (*goes to the Frog to scrutinize his face*). Nobody could guess that.

CAT. Why, about you! And if he left off dreaming about you, where do you suppose you'd be?

ALICE. Where I am now, of course.

CAT. Not you. You'd be nowhere. Why, you're only a sort of thing in his dream; and you're mad too.

ALICE. How do you know I'm mad?

CAT. You must be, or you wouldn't have come here.

ALICE. How do you know that you're mad?

CAT. To begin with, a dog's not mad. You grant that?

ALICE. I suppose so.

CAT. Well, then, you see a dog growls when it's angry, and wags its tail when it's pleased. Now I growl when I'm pleased, and wag my tail when I'm angry. Therefore I'm mad.

ALICE. I call it purring, not growling.

CAT. Call it what you like. Do you play croquet with the Queen to-day?

ALICE. I should like it very much, but I haven't been invited yet.

CAT. You'll see me there.

[*Vanishes.*]

ALICE (*to squirming Baby*). Oh, dear, it's heavy and so ugly. Don't grunt — Oh — Oh — it's a — pig. Please, Mr. Footman, take it!

FROG [*rises with dignity, whistles and disappears into the house; a kettle comes bounding out. Alice puts pig down and it crawls off.*]

CAT (*appearing again*). By-the-bye, what became of the baby?

ALICE. It turned into a pig.

CAT. I thought it would.

[*Vanishes. Frog comes out of the house with hedgehogs and flamingoes.*]

CAT (*reappearing*). Did you say pig, or fig?

ALICE. I said pig; and I wish you wouldn't keep appearing and vanishing so suddenly; you make one quite giddy.

CAT. All right.

[*It vanishes slowly. Frog puts flamingoes down and reënters*]

house. While Alice is examining the flamingoes curiously, Tweedledum and Tweedledee, each with an arm round the other's neck, sidestep in and stand looking at Alice.

ALICE (turns, sees them, starts in surprise and involuntarily whispers). Tweedle — dee.

DUM. Dum!

DEE. If you think we're waxworks, you ought to pay.

DUM. Contrariwise, if you think we're alive, you ought to speak.

DEE. The first thing in a visit is to say "How d'ye do?" and shake hands!

[The brothers give each other a hug, then hold out the two hands that are free, to shake hands with her. Alice does not like shaking hands with either of them first, for fear of hurting the other one's feelings; she takes hold of both hands at once, and they all dance round in a ring, quite naturally to music: "Here we go round the mulberry bush."]

ALICE. Would you tell me which road leads out of —

DEE. What shall I repeat to her?

DUM. The "Walrus and the Carpenter" is the longest.

[Gives his brother an affectionate hug.

DEE.

The sun was shining —

ALICE. If it's very long, would you please tell me first which road —

DEE.

The moon was shining sulkily.

DUM.

The sea was wet as wet could be —

DEE.

O Oysters, come and walk with us

The Walrus did beseech —

DUM (looks at Dee).

A pleasant walk, a pleasant talk,

Along the briny beach —

DEE (*looks at Dum*).

The eldest Oyster winked his eye
And shook his heavy head ——

DUM (*looks at Dee*).

Meaning to say he did not choose
To leave the oyster bed.

DEE.

But four young Oysters hurried up
And yet another four ——

DUM.

And thick and fast they came at last,
And more, and more, and more ——

DEE.

The Walrus and the Carpenter
Walked on a mile or so,

DUM.

And then they rested on a rock
Conveniently low,

DEE.

And all the little Oysters stood
And waited in a row.

DUM.

“A loaf of bread,” the Walrus said,
“Is what we chiefly need.

DEE.

Now if you’re ready, Oysters dear,
We can begin to feed.”

DUM.

“But not on us!” the Oysters cried,
Turning a little blue.

DEE.

“The night is fine,” the Walrus said,
“Do you admire the view?”

DUM.

The Carpenter said nothing but
“Cut us another slice.

I wish you were not quite so deaf —
I’ve had to ask you twice!”

DEE.

"It seems a shame," the Walrus said,
 "To play them such a trick,
 After we've brought them out so far,
 And made them trot so quick!"

DUM

"O Oysters," said the Carpenter,
 "You've had a pleasant run!

DEE.

Shall we be trotting home again?"

DUM.

But answer came there none —

DEE.

And this was scarcely odd, because

DUM.

They'd eaten every —

DEE (*interrupts in a passion, pointing to a white rattle on the ground*). Do you see *that*?

ALICE. It's only a rattle —

DUM (*stamps wildly and tears his hair*). I knew it was! It's spoilt, of course. My nice new rattle! (*To Dee*) You agree to have a battle?

[*He collects saucepans and pots.*

DEE (*picks up a saucepan*). I suppose so. Let's fight till dinner.

[*They go out hand in hand.*

ALICE (*hears music*). I wonder what is going to happen next. [*She backs down stage respectfully as the King and Queen of Hearts enter, followed by the Knave of Hearts, carrying the King's crown on a crimson velvet cushion, and the White Rabbit and others. When they come opposite to Alice they stop and look at her. The Duchess comes out of her house.*

QUEEN (*to the Knave*). Who is this?

KNAVE (*bows three times, smiles and giggles*).

QUEEN. Idiot! What's your name, child?

ALICE. My name is Alice, so please your Majesty.

QUEEN. Off with her head! Off —

ALICE. Nonsense!

KING. Consider, my dear, she is only a child.

QUEEN. Can you play croquet?

ALICE. Yes.

QUEEN. Come on then. Get to your places. Where are the mallets?

DUCHESS. Here.

[The Frog appears with the flamingoes and hedgehogs.]

QUEEN. Off with his head!

[No one pays any attention.]

KNAVE. What fun!

ALICE. What is the fun?

KNAVE. Why, she; it's all her fancy, that. They never execute anyone.

ALICE. What does one do?

QUEEN. Get to your places!

[She takes a flamingo; uses its neck as a mallet and a hedgehog as a ball. The Frog doubles himself into an arch. The King does the same with the followers, and the Knave offers himself as an arch for Alice. Even though Alice does not notice him, he holds the arch position. The Queen shouts at intervals, "Off with his head, off with her head."]

ALICE. Where are the Chess Queens?

RABBIT. Under sentence of execution.

ALICE. What for?

RABBIT. Did you say, "What a pity"?

ALICE. No, I didn't. I don't think it's at all a pity. I said, "What for?"

RABBIT. They boxed the Queen's ears.

[Alice gives a little scream of laughter.]

RABBIT. Oh, hush! The Queen will hear you! You see they came rather late and the Queen said — Oh, dear, the Queen hears me —

[He hurries away.]

ALICE (noticing the Knave who still pretends to be an arch). How can you go on thinking so quietly, with your head downwards?

KNAVE. What does it matter where my body happens to be? My mind goes on working just the same. The fact of it is, the more head downwards I am, the more I keep on inventing new things.

KING. Did you happen to meet any soldiers, my dear, as you came through the wood?

ALICE. Yes, I did; several thousand, I should think.

KING. Four thousand, two hundred and seven, — that's the exact number. They couldn't send all the horses, you know, because two of them are wanted in the game. And I haven't sent the two messengers, either.

ALICE. What's the war about?

KING. The red Chess King has the whole army against us, but he can't kill a man who has thirteen hearts. (*The Duchess, Queen, Frog, and followers go out. The Knave and the Five-Spot, Seven-Spot, and Nine-Spot of Hearts stand behind the King*) Just look along the road and tell me if you can see either of my messengers.

ALICE. I see nobody on the road.

KING. I only wish I had such eyes; to be able to see Nobody! And at that distance, too! Why, it's as much as I can do to see real people, by this light.

ALICE. I see somebody now! But he's coming very slowly — and what curious attitudes he goes into — skipping up and down, and wriggling like an eel.

KING. Not at all, — those are Anglo-Saxon attitudes. He only does them when he's happy. I must have two messengers, you know — to come and go. One to come and one to go.

ALICE. I beg your pardon?

KING. It isn't respectable to beg.

ALICE. I only meant that I didn't understand. Why one to come and one to go?

KING. Don't I tell you? I must have two — to fetch and carry. One to fetch, and one to carry.

MARCH HARE (*enters, pants for breath — waves his hands about and makes fearful faces at the King*).

KING. You alarm me! I feel faint — give me a ham sandwich. Another sandwich!

MARCH HARE. There's nothing but hay left now.

KING. Hay, then. There's nothing like eating hay when you're faint.

ALICE. I should think throwing cold water over you would be better.

KING. I didn't say there was nothing *better*; I said there was nothing *like* it.

KING. Who did you pass on the road?

MARCH HARE. Nobody.

KING. Quite right; this young lady saw him, too. So, of course, Nobody walks slower than you.

MARCH HARE. I do my best; I'm sure nobody walks much faster than I do.

KING. He can't do that; or else he'd have been here first. However, now you've got your breath, you may tell us what's happened in the town.

MARCH HARE. I'll whisper it. (*Much to Alice's surprise, he shouts into the King's ear*) They're at it again!

KING. Do you call *that* a whisper? If you do such a thing again, I'll have you buttered. It went through and through my head like an earthquake. Give me details, quick!

[*The King and March Hare go out, followed by Five-, Seven-, and Nine-Spots.*]

DUCHESS (*runs in and tucks her arm affectionately into Alice's*). You can't think how glad I am to see you again, you dear old thing!

ALICE. Oh!

DUCHESS. You're thinking about something, my dear, and that makes you forget to talk. I can't tell you just now what the moral of that is, but I shall remember it in a bit.

ALICE. Perhaps it hasn't one.

DUCHESS. Tut, tut, child! Everything's got a moral, if only you can find it.

[*Squeezes closely, digs her chin into Alice's shoulder, and roughly drags Alice along for a walk.*]

ALICE. The game's going on rather better now.

DUCHESS. 'Tis so, and the moral of that is — "Oh, 'tis love, 'tis love, that makes the world go round!"

ALICE. Somebody said that it's done by everybody minding their own business.

DUCHESS. Ah, well! It means much the same thing, and the moral of *that* is — "Take care of the sense, and the sounds will take care of themselves."

ALICE. How fond you are of finding morals in things.

DUCHESS. I dare say you're wondering why I don't put my arm round your waist. The reason is that I'm doubtful about the temper of your flamingo. Shall I try the experiment?

ALICE. He might bite.

DUCHESS. Very true; flamingoes and mustard both bite. And the moral of that is — "Birds of a feather flock together."

ALICE. Only mustard isn't a bird.

DUCHESS. Right, as usual; what a clear way you have of putting things.

ALICE. It's a mineral, I *think*.

DUCHESS. Of course it is; there's a large mustard mine near here. And the moral of that is — "The more there is of mine, the less there is of yours."

ALICE. Oh! I know, it's a vegetable. It doesn't look like one, but it is.

DUCHESS. I quite agree with you, and the moral of that is — "Be what you would seem to be"; or, if you'd like it put more simply, "Never imagine yourself not to be otherwise than what it might appear to others that what you were or might have been was not otherwise than what you had been would have appeared to them to be otherwise."

ALICE. I think I should understand that better if I had it written down, but I can't quite follow it as you say it.

DUCHESS. That's nothing to what I could say if I chose.

ALICE. Pray don't trouble yourself to say it any longer than that.

DUCHESS. Oh, don't talk about trouble; I make you a present of everything I've said as yet.

ALICE. Uhm!

DUCHESS. Thinking again?

ALICE. I've got a right to think.

DUCHESS. Just about as much right as pigs have to fly, and the moral — (*The arm of the Duchess begins to tremble and her voice dies down. The Queen of Hearts stands before them with folded arms and frowning like a thunder-storm*) A fine day, your Majesty.

QUEEN. Now, I give you fair warning, either you or your head must be off, and that in about half no time. Take your choice! (*The Duchess goes meekly into the house*) Let's go on with the game.

[*She goes off, and shouts at intervals, "Off with his head; off with her head."*]

CAT. How are you getting on?

ALICE. It's no use speaking to you till your ears have come. I don't think they play at all fairly, and they all quarrel so, and they don't seem to have any rules in particular. And you've no idea how confusing it is, with all the things alive; there's the arch I've got to go through next, walking about at the other end of the ground — and I should have croqueted the Queen's hedgehog, just now, only it ran away when it saw mine coming.

[*Music begins.*]

CAT. How do you like the Queen?

ALICE. Not at all; she's so extremely — (*The King, Queen and entire Court enter. The Queen is near to Alice. The music stops, and all look at Alice, questioningly. Alice tries to propitiate the Queen*) — likely to win, (*music continues*) that it's hardly worth while finishing the game.

[*Queen smiles and passes on.*]

KING. Who are you talking to?

ALICE. It's a friend of mine — a Cheshire Cat — allow me to introduce it.

KING. I don't like the look of it at all; however, it may kiss my hand if it likes.

CAT. I'd rather not.

KING. Don't be impertinent and don't look at me like that.

ALICE. A cat may look at a king. I've read that in some book, but I don't remember where.

KING. Well, it must be removed. My dear! I wish you would have this cat removed.

QUEEN. Off with his head!

KNAVE. But you can't cut off a head unless there's a body to cut it off from.

KING. Anything that has a head can be beheaded.

QUEEN. If something isn't done about it in less than no time, I'll have everybody executed, all round.

ALICE. It belongs to the Duchess; you'd better ask her about it.

DUCHESS. It's a lie!

CAT. You'd better ask me. Do it if you can.

[It grins away. The Duchess and Frog escape into the house.]

QUEEN. Cut it off!

KING. It's gone.

EVERYBODY. It's gone! It's gone! Where, where, where ——

QUEEN. Cut it off. Cut them all off!

EVERYBODY. No, no, no!

ALICE. Save me, save me!

KNAVE (*shouts to Alice and gives her a tart for safety*). Take a tart!

QUEEN (*seeing Alice stand out a moment from the others*). Cut hers off! Cut hers off!

OTHERS (*glad to distract Queen's attention from themselves*). Cut hers off, cut hers off, cut ——

ALICE [*Cries in fear and takes a quick bite at the tart. If there is a trap-door on the stage, Alice disappears down it, leaving the crowd circling around the hole, screaming and amazed. If the stage has no trap-door, a bridge is built across the footlights, with stairs leading down into the orchestra pit. When the crowd is chasing Alice, she jumps over the footlights onto the bridge, and, as the curtain is falling, dividing her from the crowd, she appeals to the audience, "Save me, save me, who will save me?" and runs down the stairs and disappears.*]

CURTAIN

ACT III

SCENE I

Is a garden of high, very conventional and artificial looking flowers. On a large mushroom sits the Caterpillar, smoking a hookah. Alice is whirling about, trying to get her equilibrium after her fall. She goes to the mushroom timidly, and, conscious of her size, for her chin reaches the top of the mushroom, she gazes at the Caterpillar wonderingly. He looks at her lazily, and speaks in a languid voice.

CATERPILLAR. Who are you?

ALICE. I — I hardly know, sir, just at present. The Queen frightened me so, and I've had an awfully funny fall down a tunnel or a sort of well. At least I know who I was when I got up this morning, but I think I must have been changed several times since then.

CATERPILLAR. What do you mean by that? Explain yourself.

ALICE. I can't explain myself, I'm afraid, sir, because I'm not myself, you see. Being so many different sizes in a day is very confusing.

CATERPILLAR. You! Who are you?

ALICE. I think you ought to tell me who you are, first.

CATERPILLAR. Why? (*As Alice turns away*) Come back. I've something important to say. (*Alice comes back*) Keep your temper.

ALICE. Is that all?

CATERPILLAR. No. (*He puffs at the hookah in silence; finally takes it out of his mouth and unfolds his arms*) So you think you're changed, do you?

ALICE. I'm afraid I am, sir; I don't keep the same size.

CATERPILLAR. What size do you want to be?

ALICE. I don't know. At least I've never been so small as a caterpillar.

CATERPILLAR (*rears angrily*). It is a very good height indeed.

ALICE. But I'm not used to it; I wish you wouldn't all be so easily offended.

CATERPILLAR. You'll get used to it in time.

ALICE. Are you too big or am I too small?

[She compares her height wonderingly with the tall flowers.]

CATERPILLAR *(looks at her sleepily, yawns, shakes himself, slides down from the mushroom, and crawls slowly away)*. One side will make you grow taller, and the other side will make you grow shorter.

ALICE. One side of what? The other side of what?

CATERPILLAR. Of the mushroom.

[Alice hesitates, then embraces mushroom and picks bit from each side. Three Gardeners, representing spades, enter, carrying brushes and red paint cans.]

TWO-SPOT. Look out now, Five. Don't go splashing paint over me like that.

FIVE-SPOT. I couldn't help it. Seven jogged my elbow.

SEVEN-SPOT. That's right, Five, always lay the blame on others.

FIVE-SPOT. You'd better not talk. I heard the Queen say only yesterday you deserved to be beheaded.

TWO-SPOT. What for?

SEVEN-SPOT. That's none of your business, Two.

FIVE-SPOT. Yes, it is his business, and I'll tell him. It was for bringing the cook tulip roots instead of onions.

SEVEN-SPOT. Well, of all the unjust things —

[Sees Alice; others look around: all bow.]

ALICE. Could you please tell me what side to eat?

[Five and Seven look at Two.]

TWO-SPOT. I don't know anything about it. *(He paints a white rose, red)* You ought to have been red; we put you in by mistake, and, if the Queen was to find it out, we should all have our heads cut off.

[A thumping is heard off stage and the music grows louder and louder.]

ALICE. What's that?

FIVE-SPOT. The White Chess Queen.

SEVEN-SPOT. Don't let her see what we are doing.

TWO-SPOT. She'll tell on us.

SEVEN-SPOT. Run out and stop her from coming here.

FIVE-SPOT (*to Alice as she runs to the right*). No, no, the other way.

ALICE. But she's off there!

TWO-SPOT. You can only meet her by walking the other way.

ALICE. Oh! what nonsense!

ALL THE GARDENERS. Go the other way!

ALICE (*reënters in dismay and dashes out to the left*). She's running away from me. (*The White Queen backs in from right and Alice backs in from left. They meet. The Gardeners cry, "The Queen," and throw themselves flat upon the ground; their backs are like the backs of the rest of the pack. Music stops. Alice looks at the Queen curiously*) Oh, there you are! Why, I'm just the size I was when I saw you last.

WHITE QUEEN. Of course you are, and who are these? I can't tell them by their backs. (*She turns them over with her foot*) Turn over. Ah! I thought so! Get up! What have you been doing here?

TWO-SPOT. May it please your Majesty, we were trying ——

WHITE QUEEN (*examines rose*). I see! Begone, or I'll send the horses after you, and tell the Queen of Hearts.

[*Gardeners rush off. The Red Queen enters. Alice has gone to the mushroom again to look at its sides, and there to her amazement finds a gold crown and scepter, which she immediately appropriates. Music. The Queens watch Alice superciliously. Alice puts on her crown, proudly exclaiming, in great elation, "Queen Alice," and walks down stage, bowing right and left to the homage of imaginary subjects. She repeats, as if scarcely daring to believe it true, "Queen Alice." Music stops.*

RED QUEEN. Ridiculous!

ALICE. Isn't this the Eighth Square?

RED QUEEN. You can't be a Queen, you know, till you've passed the proper examination.

WHITE QUEEN. The sooner we begin it, the better.

ALICE. Please, would you tell me ——

RED QUEEN. Speak when you're spoken to.

ALICE. But if everybody obeyed that rule, and if you only

spoke when you were spoken to, and the other person always waited for you to begin, you see nobody would ever say anything, so that —

RED QUEEN. Preposterous.

ALICE. I only said "if."

RED QUEEN. She says she only said "if."

WHITE QUEEN (*moans and wrings her hands*). But she said a great deal more than that. Ah, yes, so much more than that.

RED QUEEN. So you did, you know; always speak the truth — think before you speak — and write it down afterwards.

ALICE. I'm sure I didn't mean —

RED QUEEN. That's just what I complained of. You *should* have meant! What do you suppose is the use of a child without any meaning? Even a joke should have some meaning — and a child's more important than a joke, I hope. You couldn't deny that, even if you tried with both hands.

ALICE. I don't deny things with my *hands*.

RED QUEEN. Nobody said you did. I said you couldn't if you tried.

WHITE QUEEN. She's in that state of mind, that she wants to deny *something* — only she doesn't know what to deny!

RED QUEEN. A nasty, vicious temper. I invite you to Alice's dinner party this afternoon.

WHITE QUEEN. And I invite *you*.

ALICE. I didn't know I was to have a party at all; but, if there is to be one, I think I ought to invite the guests.

RED QUEEN. We gave you the opportunity of doing it, but I dare say you've not had many lessons in manners yet.

ALICE. Manners are not taught in lessons; lessons teach you to do sums, and things of that sort.

WHITE QUEEN. Can you do addition? What's one and one and one and one and one and one and one and one and one?

ALICE. I don't know. I lost count.

RED QUEEN. She can't do addition; can you do subtraction? Take nine from eight.

ALICE. Nine from eight I can't, you know, but ——

WHITE QUEEN. She can't do subtraction. Can you do division?

Divide a loaf by a knife — what's the answer to that?

ALICE. I suppose ——

RED QUEEN (*answers for her*). Bread and butter, of course.

Try another subtraction sum. Take a bone from a dog; what remains?

ALICE. The bone wouldn't remain, of course, if I took it — and the dog wouldn't remain; it would come to bite me — and I'm sure I shouldn't remain.

RED QUEEN. Then you think nothing would remain?

ALICE. I think that's the answer.

RED QUEEN. Wrong as usual; the dog's temper would remain.

ALICE. But I don't see how ——

RED QUEEN. Why, look here; the dog would lose its temper, wouldn't it?

ALICE. Perhaps it would.

RED QUEEN. Then, if the dog went away, its temper would remain!

ALICE. They might go different ways! What dreadful nonsense we *are* talking.

BOTH QUEENS. She can't do sums a bit!

ALICE. Can *you* do sums?

WHITE QUEEN. I can do addition, if you give me time — but I can't do *subtraction* under *any* circumstances.

RED QUEEN. Of course you know your A, B, C?

ALICE. To be sure I do.

WHITE QUEEN. So do I; we'll often say it over together, dear. And I'll tell you a secret — I can read words of one letter. Isn't that grand? However, don't be discouraged. You'll come to it in time.

RED QUEEN. Can you answer useful questions? How is bread made?

ALICE. I know *that*! You take some flour ——

WHITE QUEEN. Where do you pick the flower? In a garden or in the hedges?

ALICE. Well, it isn't *picked* at all. It's ground ——

WHITE QUEEN. How many acres of ground? You mustn't leave out so many things.

RED QUEEN. Fan her head! She'll be feverish after so much thinking.

[They fan her with bunches of leaves which blow her hair wildly.]

ALICE. Please — please ——

RED QUEEN. She's all right again now. Do you know languages? What's the French for fiddle-de-dee?

ALICE. Fiddle-de-dee's not English.

RED QUEEN. Who ever said it was?

ALICE. If you tell me what language fiddle-de-dee is, I'll tell you the French for it!

RED QUEEN. Queens never make bargains!

ALICE. I wish queens never asked questions!

WHITE QUEEN. Don't let us quarrel; what is the cause of lightning?

ALICE. The cause of lightning is the thunder — no, no! I meant the other way.

RED QUEEN. It's too late to correct it; when you've once said a thing, that fixes it, and you must take the consequences.

WHITE QUEEN. We had *such* a thunder-storm next Tuesday, you can't think.

RED QUEEN. She *never* could, you know.

WHITE QUEEN. Part of the roof came off, and ever so much thunder got in — and it went rolling round the room in great lumps — and knocking over the tables and things — till I was so frightened, I couldn't remember my own name!

ALICE. I never should *try* to remember my name in the middle of an accident. Where would be the use of it?

RED QUEEN. You must excuse her. She means well, but she can't help saying foolish things, as a general rule. She never was really well brought up, but it's amazing how good-tempered she is! Pat her on the head, and see how pleased she'll be! A little kindness and putting her hair in papers would do wonders with her.

WHITE QUEEN (*gives a deep sigh and leans her head on Alice's shoulder*). I am so sleepy!

RED QUEEN. She's tired, poor thing; smooth her hair — lend her your nightcap — and sing her a soothing lullaby.

ALICE. I haven't got a nightcap with me, and I don't know any soothing lullabies.

RED QUEEN. I must do it myself, then.

Hush-a-by lady, in Alice's lap!

Till the feast's ready, we've time for a nap;

When the feast's over, we'll go to the ball —

Red Queen and White Queen and Alice and all!

And now you know the words (*she puts her head on Alice's other shoulder*), just sing it through to me. I'm getting sleepy too.

[*Both Queens fall fast asleep and snore loudly.*]

ALICE. What am I to do? Take care of two Queens asleep at once? Do wake up, you heavy things!

[*All lights go out, leaving a mysterious glow on Alice and the Queens.*]

WHITE RABBIT (*blows trumpet off stage*). The trial's beginning!

ALICE. What trial is it?

WHITE RABBIT. Who stole the tarts?

ALICE. I ate a tart.

WHITE RABBIT. You've got to be tried.

ALICE. I don't want to be tried.

WHITE RABBIT. You've got to be tried.

ALICE. I won't be tried — I won't — I won't!

SCENE II

Is a court-room, suggesting playing cards. The Jurymen are all kinds of creatures. The King and Queen of Hearts are seated on the throne. The Knave is before them in chains. The White Rabbit has a trumpet in one hand, and a scroll of parchment in the other. In the middle of the court stands a table with a large dish of tarts upon it.

WHITE RABBIT (*blows three blasts on his trumpet*). Silence in the court!

ALICE (*watches Jurymen writing busily on their slates*). What

are they doing? They can't have anything to put down yet, before the trial's begun.

KNAVE. They're putting down their names for fear they should forget them before the end of the trial.

ALICE. Stupid things!

WHITE RABBIT. Silence in the court!

JURORS (*write in chorus*). Stupid things!

ONE JUROR. How do you spell stupid?

ALICE. A nice muddle their slates will be in before the trial's over.

QUEEN. There's a pencil squeaking. Cut it down!

JURORS (*in chorus as they write*). Squeaking —

KING (*wears a crown over his wig; puts on his spectacles as he says*). Herald, read the accusation!

WHITE RABBIT (*blows three blasts on his trumpet, unrolls parchment scroll, and reads to music*).

The Queen of Hearts, she made some tarts,
All on a summer day;
The Knave of Hearts, he stole those tarts,
And took them quite away!

KING. Consider your verdict!

WHITE RABBIT. Not yet, not yet; there's a great deal to come before that.

KING. Call the first witness.

WHITE RABBIT. First witness!

HATTER (*comes in with a teacup in one hand and a piece of bread and butter in the other*). I beg your pardon, your Majesty, for bringing these in, but I hadn't quite finished my tea when I was sent for.

KING. You ought to have finished; when did you begin?

HATTER (*looks at the March Hare, who follows him arm in arm with the Dormouse*). Fourteenth of March, I think it was.

MARCH HARE. Fifteenth.

DORMOUSE. Sixteenth.

KING. Write that down.

JURY. Fourteen, fifteen, sixteen — forty-five. Reduce that to shillings —

KING. Take off your hat.

HATTER. It isn't mine.

KING. *Stolen!*

JURY. *Stolen!*

HATTER. I keep them to sell. I've none of my own. I'm a hatter.

QUEEN OF HEARTS (*puts on her spectacles and stares at Hatter, who fidgets uncomfortably*).

KING. Give your evidence and don't be nervous, or I'll have you executed on the spot.

[*The Hatter continues to shift nervously from one foot to the other, looks uneasily at the Queen, trembles so that he shakes off both of his shoes, and in his confusion bites a large piece out of his teacup instead of the bread and butter.*]

HATTER. I'm a poor man, your Majesty, and I hadn't but just begun my tea — not above a week or so — and what with the bread and butter getting so thin — and the twinkling of the tea —

KING. The twinkling of *what?*

HATTER. It began with the tea.

KING. Of course twinkling begins with a T. Do you take me for a dunce? Go on!

HATTER. I'm a poor man and most things twinkled after that — only the March Hare said —

MARCH HARE. I didn't!

HATTER. You did.

MARCH HARE. I deny it.

KING. He denies it; leave out that part.

QUEEN. But what did the Dormouse say?

HATTER. That I can't remember.

KING. You *must* remember or I'll have you executed.

HATTER (*drops teacup and bread and butter and goes down on one knee*). I'm a poor man, your Majesty.

KING. If that's all you know about it you may stand down.

HATTER. I can't go no lower; I'm on the floor as it is.

KING. Then you may sit down.

HATTER. I'd rather finish my tea.

KING. You may go.

[The Hatter goes out hurriedly, leaving one of his shoes behind.]

QUEEN (*nonchalantly to an Officer*). And just take his head off outside.

[But the Hatter is out of sight before the Officer can get to the door.]

KING. Call the next witness!

WHITE RABBIT. Next witness!

[The Duchess enters with a pepper-pot, which she shakes about.]

Everybody begins to sneeze. March Hare sneezes and rushes out.

KING. Give your evidence!

DUCHESS. Sha'n't!

WHITE RABBIT. Your Majesty must cross-examine *this* witness.

KING. Well, if I must, I must. What does your cook say tarts are made of?

DUCHESS. Pepper.

[The Duchess shakes the pot and the court sneezes.]

DORMOUSE. Treacle!

[The Duchess shakes the pot at him. He sneezes for the first time.]

QUEEN. Collar the Dormouse! Behead the Dormouse! Turn that Dormouse out of court! Suppress him! Pinch him! Off with his whiskers!

[The whole court is in confusion, turning the Dormouse out, and, while it is settling down again, the Duchess disappears.]

WHITE RABBIT. The Duchess!

COURT. She's gone — she's gone!

KING. Never mind! (*In a low tone to the Queen*) Really, my dear, you must cross-examine the next witness. It quite makes my forehead ache! Call the next witness!

WHITE RABBIT (*fumbles with the parchment, — then cries in a shrill little voice*). Alice!

ALICE. Here!

KING. What do you know about this business?

ALICE. Nothing whatever.

KING (*to the Jury*). That 's very important.

WHITE RABBIT. Unimportant, your Majesty means, of course.

KING. Unimportant, of course I meant. Important — unimportant — unimportant — important. Consider your verdict!

[Some of the Jury write "important" and some write "unimportant."

WHITE RABBIT. There's more evidence to come yet, please your Majesty; this paper has just been picked up.

QUEEN. What's in it?

WHITE RABBIT (*fumbles with a huge envelope*). I haven't opened it yet, but it seems to be a letter, written by the prisoner to — to somebody.

KING. It must have been that, unless it was written to nobody, which isn't usual, you know.

ALICE. Who is it directed to?

WHITE RABBIT. It isn't directed at all; in fact, there's nothing written on the *outside*. (*Takes out a tiny piece of paper*) It isn't a letter at all; it's a set of verses.

QUEEN. Are they in the prisoner's handwriting?

[*The Jury brightens up.*

WHITE RABBIT (*Looks at the Knave's hand. Knave hides his hand; the chains rattle*). No, they're not, and that's the queerest thing about it.

[*The Jury looks puzzled.*

KING. He must have imitated somebody else's hand!

KNAVE. Please, your Majesty, I didn't write it and they can't prove I did; there's no name signed at the end.

KING. If you didn't sign it that only makes the matter worse. You *must* have meant some mischief, or else you'd have signed your name like an honest man.

[*At this there is a general clapping of hands.*

QUEEN. That *proves* his guilt.

ALICE. It proves nothing of the sort! Why, you don't even know what they're about.

KING. Read them!

WHITE RABBIT (*puts on his monocle*). Where shall I begin, please your Majesty?

KING. Begin at the beginning and go on till you come to the end, then stop.

WHITE RABBIT.

“They told me you had been to her,
And mentioned me to him;
She gave me a good character,
But said I could not swim.

“I gave her one, they gave him two,
You gave us three or more;
They all returned from him to you,
Though they were mine before.

“My notion was that you had been
(Before she had this fit)
An obstacle that came between
Him, and ourselves, and it.

“Don’t let him know she liked him best,
For this must ever be
A secret, kept from all the rest,
Between yourself and me.”

KING. That’s the most important piece of evidence we’ve heard yet; so now let the jury —

ALICE. If anyone of them can explain it, I’ll give him sixpence. I don’t believe there’s an atom of meaning in it.

JURY. She doesn’t believe there’s an atom of meaning in it.

KING. If there’s no meaning in it, that saves a world of trouble, you know, as we needn’t try to find any. And yet I don’t know. (*Spreads out the verses on his knee and studies them*) I seem to see some meaning after all. “Said I could not swim.” You can’t swim, can you?

KNAVE (*shakes his head sadly and points to his suit*). Do I look like it?

KING. All right, so far; “We know it to be true,” that’s the jury, of course; “I gave her one, they gave him two” — why, that must be what he did with the tarts, you know —

ALICE. But it goes on, "they all returned from *him* to *you*."

KING (*triumphantly pointing to the tarts*). Why, there they are!

Nothing can be clearer than that. Then again, "before she had this fit," — you never had fits, my dear, I think?

QUEEN. Never!

KING. Then the words don't *fit* you.

[*There is dead silence, while the King looks around at the court with a smile.*]

KING. It's a pun! (*Everybody laughs. Music*) Let the jury consider their verdict.

QUEEN. No, no! Sentence first — verdict afterwards.

ALICE. Stuff and nonsense!

QUEEN (*furiously*). Hold your tongue!

ALICE. I won't!

QUEEN. Off with her head!

ALICE. Who cares for you?

QUEEN. Cut it off!

ALICE. You're nothing but a pack of cards!

[*As lights go out and curtain falls all the characters hold their positions as if petrified.*]

CURTAIN

SCENE III

The curtain rises to show Alice still asleep in the armchair, the fire in the grate suffusing her with its glow.

CARROLL. Wake up, Alice, it is time for tea.

[*Off stage, the characters repeat their most characteristic lines, "Off with her head," "Consider your verdict," "Oh! my fur and whiskers"; the Duchess sneezes, the Cat cries, as if the characters were fading away into the pack of real playing cards which shower through the mirror all over Alice. There is music.*]

ALICE (*wakes, rises, and looks about in surprise and wonderment*).

Why — it was a dream!

CURTAIN.

ABOUT THE TRAVELLING MAN

Lady Gregory has written a charming book for one of the little boys of her family, telling the story of "Our Irish Theater." She knows that when he grows up he will want to read about all the experiences which befell the Irish Players in Ireland, in England and in America. The Irish Theater was storm-tossed, as everything Irish has been for years and years and years. It was a very delicate seed planted in the minds of people who had a false idea that the typical Irishman was comical, with a snub nose, widely spaced teeth, and with a brogue or accent hardly understandable. The clay pipe and the potato were his trade-mark.

But Mr. W. B. Yeats, a poet who has written some beautiful verse and whose plays, especially "The Pot of Broth" and "The Land of the Heart's Desire" — are not so far away from youthful understanding (and when one speaks of "The Land of the Heart's Desire", one instinctively recalls the haunting beauty of Hauptmann's "Hannele") — Yeats and Lady Gregory, with some other Irish artists and writers, made up their minds they would let the world know that Ireland meant poetry, legend, folklore and song, rich music of speech and even richer beauty of face and figure; that Ireland meant tragedy of heart, and love, and passion; and that the humour of Ireland was not the slap-stick kind, but something else.

So, through their enthusiasm, they wakened the Irish artists to the beauties of simple family life (Maria Edgeworth had suggested them in "Castle Rackrent"), to the foibles of Irish character; and they tried to revive the Gaelic language which was once their common tongue, and which some of their older folk still clung to as their own. This idea appealed to some, it made others stubborn in their opposition. Because of this division of opinion, the Irish Theater had a difficult time. But

Yeats and Lady Gregory nurtured the plays sent them, written by John Synge and others; and they themselves wrote singly and together pieces which reflected the poetry, the tradition and the reality of Irish life. These dramas were often given in the face of opposition, for the Irish are sensitive, and do not like to be pictured too truthfully, for fear of being misunderstood and misrepresented. It took them some time to see that these writers — headed by Yeats and Lady Gregory — were fighting in the only sane way for Ireland's artistic recognition.

Most of the dramas were either folk plays or stories conceived of high imagination, mixed with national lore. They were drawn out of the very life and customs of the people. An excellent example of this is Lady Gregory's "The Travelling Man", founded on peasant belief. She has written of it in the following manner:

"An old woman living in a cabin by a bog road on Slieve Echtge told me the legend on which this play is founded, and which I have already published in 'Poets and Dreamers.'

"There was a poor girl walking the road one night with no place to stop, and the Saviour met her on the road, and He said — "Go up to the house you see a light in; there's a woman dead there, and they'll let you in." So she went, and she found the woman laid out, and the husband and other people; but she worked harder than they all, and she stopped in the house after; and after two quarters the man married her. And one day she was sitting outside the door, picking over a bag of wheat, and the Saviour came again, with the appearance of a poor man, and He asked her for a few grains of the wheat. And she said — "Wouldn't potatoes be good enough for you?" And she called to the girl within to bring out a few potatoes. But He took nine grains of the wheat in His hand and went away; and there wasn't a grain of wheat left in the bag, but all gone. So she ran after Him then to ask Him to forgive her; and she overtook Him on the road, and she asked forgiveness. And He said — "Don't you remember the time you had no house to go to, and I met you on the road, and sent you to a house where you'd live in plenty? And now you wouldn't give

Me a few grains of wheat." And she said — "But why didn't you give me a heart that would like to divide it?" That is how she came round on Him. And He said — "From this out, whenever you have plenty in your hands, divide it freely for My sake."'

"And an old woman who sold sweets in a little shop in Galway, and whose son became a great Dominican preacher, used to say — 'Refuse not any, for one may be the Christ.'

"I owe the Rider's Song, and some of the rest, to W. B. Yeats."

This drama, which formed a part of the repertory of the Children's Educational Theater, in New York, is a modern miracle play, and, just as only the pure in heart may see God, so in the miracle plays only the truly good may see more than they actually see. Thus have Tolstoi, the Russian writer, and Tagore, the East Indian, and Lady Gregory, the Irish dramatist, touched the heart of child purity and the heart of eternal truth in their exquisite "God is Love", "The Post Office", and "The Travelling Man."

THE TRAVELLING MAN

By LADY GREGORY

PERSONS

A MOTHER

A CHILD

A TRAVELLING MAN

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THE TRAVELLING MAN

A MIRACLE PLAY

SCENE. *A cottage kitchen. A woman setting out a bowl and jug and board on the table for breadmaking.*

CHILD. What is it you are going to make, mother?

MOTHER. I am going to make a grand cake with white flour. Seeds I will put in it. Maybe I'll make a little cake for yourself too. You can be baking it in the little pot while the big one will be baking in the big pot.

CHILD. It is a pity daddy to be away at the fair on a Samhain night.

MOTHER. I must make my feast all the same, for Samhain night is more to me than to any other one. It was on this night seven years I first came into this house.

CHILD. You will be taking down those plates from the dresser so, those plates with flowers on them, and be putting them on the table.

MOTHER. I will. I will set out the house to-day, and bring down the best delf, and put whatever thing is best on the table, because of the great thing that happened me seven years ago.

CHILD. What great thing was that?

MOTHER. I was after being driven out of the house where I was a serving girl. . . .

CHILD. Where was that house? Tell me about it.

MOTHER (*sitting down and pointing southward*). It is over there I was living, in a farmer's house up on Slieve Echtge, near to Slieve na n-Or, the Golden Mountain.

CHILD. The Golden Mountain! That must be a grand place.

MOTHER. Not very grand indeed, but bare and cold enough at that time of the year. Anyway, I was driven out a Samhain day like this, because of some things that were said against me.

CHILD. What did you do then?

MOTHER. What had I to do but to go walking the bare bog road through the rough hills where there was no shelter to find, and the sharp wind going through me, and the red mud heavy on my shoes. I came to Kilbecanty. . . .

CHILD. I know Kilbecanty. That is where the woman in the shop gave me sweets out of a bottle.

MOTHER. So she might now, but that night her door was shut and all the doors were shut; and I saw through the windows the boys and the girls sitting round the hearth and playing their games, and I had no courage to ask for shelter. In dread I was they might think some shameful thing of me, and I going the road alone in the night-time.

CHILD. Did you come here after that?

MOTHER. I went on down the hill in the darkness, and with the dint of my trouble and the length of the road my strength failed me, and I had like to fall. So I did fall at the last, meeting with a heap of broken stones by the roadside.

CHILD. I hurt my knee one time I fell on the stones.

MOTHER. It was then the great thing happened. I saw a stranger coming towards me, a very tall man, the best I ever saw, bright and shining that you could see him through the darkness; and I knew him to be no common man.

CHILD. Who was he?

MOTHER. It is what I thought, that he was the King of the World.

CHILD. Had he a crown like a King?

MOTHER. If he had, it was made of the twigs of a bare black-thorn; but in his hand he had a green branch, that never grew on a tree of this world. He took me by the hand, and he led me over the stepping-stones outside to this door, and he bade me to go in and I would find good shelter. I was kneeling down to thank him, but he raised me up and he said, "I will come to see you some other time. And do not shut up your heart in the things I give you," he said, "but have a welcome before me."

CHILD. Did he go away then?

MOTHER. I saw him no more after that, but I did as he bade me. (*She stands up and goes to the door*) I came in like this, and your father was sitting there by the hearth, a lonely man that was after losing his wife. He was alone and I was alone, and we married one another; and I never wanted since for shelter or safety. And a good wife I made him, and a good housekeeper.

CHILD. Will the King come again to the house?

MOTHER. I have his word for it he will come, but he did not come yet; it is often your father and myself looked out the door of a Samhain night, thinking to see him.

CHILD. I hope he won't come in the night time, and I asleep.

MOTHER. It is of him I do be thinking every year, and I setting out the house, and making a cake for the supper.

CHILD. What will he do when he comes in?

MOTHER. He will sit over there in the chair, and maybe he will taste a bit of the cake. I will call in all the neighbours; I will tell them he is here. They will not be keeping it in their mind against me then that I brought nothing, coming to the house. They will know I am before any of them, the time they know who it is has come to visit me. They will all kneel down and ask for his blessing. But the best blessing will be on the house he came to of himself.

CHILD. And are you going to make the cake now?

MOTHER. I must make it now indeed, or I will be late with it. I am late as it is; I was expecting one of the neighbours to bring me white flour from the town. I'll wait no longer, I'll go borrow it in some place. There will be a wedding in the stonecutter's house Thursday, it's likely there will be flour in the house.

CHILD. Let me go along with you.

MOTHER. It is best for you to stop here. Be a good child now, and don't be meddling with the things on the table. Sit down there by the hearth and break up those little sticks I am after bringing in. Make a little heap of them now before me, and we will make a good fire to bake the cake. See

now how many will you break. Don't go out the door while I'm away; I would be in dread of you going near the river and it in flood. Behave yourself well now. Be counting the sticks as you break them.

[She goes out.]

CHILD (*sitting down and breaking sticks across his knee*). One — and two — O I can break this one into a great many, one, two, three, four. — This one is wet — I don't like a wet one — five, six — that is a great heap. — Let me try that great big one. — That is too hard. — I don't think mother could break that one. — Daddy could break it.

[Half-door is opened and a Travelling Man comes in. He wears a ragged white flannel shirt, and mud-stained trousers. He is bareheaded and barefooted, and carries a little branch in his hand.]

TRAVELLING MAN (*stooping over the Child and taking the stick*). Give it here to me and hold this.

[He puts the branch in the Child's hand while he takes the stick and breaks it.]

CHILD. That is a good branch, apples on it and flowers. The tree at the mill has apples yet, but all the flowers are gone.

Where did you get this branch?

TRAVELLING MAN. I got it in a garden a long way off.

CHILD. Where is the garden? Where do you come from?

TRAVELLING MAN (*pointing southward*). I have come from beyond those hills.

CHILD. Is it from the Golden Mountain you are come? From Slieve na n-Or?

TRAVELLING MAN. That is where I come from surely, from the Golden Mountain. I would like to sit down and rest for a while.

CHILD. Sit down here beside me. We must not go near the table or touch anything, or mother will be angry. Mother is going to make a beautiful cake, a cake that will be fit for a King that might be coming in to our supper.

TRAVELLING MAN. I will sit here with you on the floor.

[Sits down.]

CHILD. Tell me now about the Golden Mountain.

TRAVELLING MAN. There is a garden in it, and there is a tree in the garden that has fruit and flowers at the one time.

CHILD. Like this branch?

TRAVELLING MAN. Just like that little branch.

CHILD. What other things are in the garden?

TRAVELLING MAN. There are birds of all colours that sing at every hour, the way the people will come to their prayers. And there is a high wall about the garden.

CHILD. What way can the people get through the wall?

TRAVELLING MAN. There are four gates in the wall: a gate of gold, and a gate of silver, and a gate of crystal, and a gate of white brass.

CHILD (*taking up the sticks*). I will make a garden. I will make a wall with these sticks.

TRAVELLING MAN. This big stick will make the first wall.

[*They build a square wall with sticks.*]

CHILD (*taking up branch*). I will put this in the middle. This is the tree. I will get something to make it stand up. (*Gets up and looks at dresser*) I can't reach it; get up and give me that shining jug.

[*Travelling Man gets up and gives him the jug.*]

TRAVELLING MAN. Here it is for you.

CHILD (*puts it within the walls and sets the branch in it*). Tell me something else that is in the garden?

TRAVELLING MAN. There are four wells of water in it, that are as clear as glass.

CHILD. Get me down those cups, those flowery cups; we will put them for wells. (*He hands them down*) Now I will make the gates; give me those plates for gates, not those ugly ones, those nice ones at the top.

[*He takes them down and they put them on the four sides for gates. The Child gets up and looks at it.*]

TRAVELLING MAN. There now, it is finished.

CHILD. Is it as good as the other garden? How can we go to the Golden Mountain to see the other garden?

TRAVELLING MAN. We can ride to it.

CHILD. But we have no horse.

TRAVELLING MAN. This form will be our horse. (*He draws a form out of the corner, and sits down astride on it, putting the Child before him*) Now, off we go! (*Sings, the Child repeating the refrain*)

Come ride and ride to the garden,
Come ride and ride with a will:
For the flower comes with the fruit there
Beyond a hill and a hill.

Refrain

Come ride and ride to the garden,
Come ride like the March wind;
There's barley there, and water there,
And stabling to your mind.

TRAVELLING MAN. How did you like that ride, little horseman?

CHILD. Go on again! I want another ride!

TRAVELLING MAN. (*Sings*)

The Archangels stand in a row there
And all the garden bless,
The Archangel Axel, Victor the angel
Work at the cider press.

Refrain

Come ride and ride to the garden, &c.

CHILD. We will soon be at the Golden Mountain now. Ride again. Sing another song.

TRAVELLING MAN. (*Sings*)

O scent of the broken apples!
O shuffling of holy shoes!
Beyond a hill and a hill there
In the land that no one knows.

Refrain

Come ride and ride to the garden, &c.

CHILD. Now another ride.

TRAVELLING MAN. This will be the last. It will be a good ride.

[The Mother comes in. She stares for a second, then throws down her basket and snatches up the Child.]

MOTHER. Did ever anyone see the like of that! A common beggar, a travelling man off the roads, to be holding the child! To be leaving his ragged arms about him as if he was of his own sort! Get out of that, whoever you are, and quit this house or I'll call to some that will make you quit it.

CHILD. Do not send him out! He is not a bad man; he is a good man; he was playing horses with me. He has grand songs.

MOTHER. Let him get away out of this now, himself and his share of songs. Look at the way he has your bib destroyed that I was after washing in the morning!

CHILD. He was holding me on the horse. We were riding; I might have fallen. He held me.

MOTHER. I give you my word you are done now with riding horses. Let him go on his road. I have no time to be cleaning the place after the like of him.

CHILD. He is tired. Let him stop here till evening.

TRAVELLING MAN. Let me rest here for a while; I have been travelling a long way.

MOTHER. Where did you come from to-day?

TRAVELLING MAN. I came over Slieve Echtge from Slieve na n-Or. I had no house to stop in. I walked the long bog road, the wind was going through me, there was no shelter to be got, the red mud of the road was heavy on my feet. I got no welcome in the villages, and so I came on to this place, to the rising of the river at Ballylee.

MOTHER. It is best for you to go on to the town. It is not far for you to go. We will maybe have company coming in here.

[She pours out flour into a bowl and begins mixing.]

TRAVELLING MAN. Will you give me a bit of that dough to bring with me? I have gone a long time fasting.

MOTHER. It is not often in the year I make bread like this.

There are a few cold potatoes on the dresser; are they not good enough for you? There is many a one would be glad to get them.

TRAVELLING MAN. Whatever you will give me, I will take it.

MOTHER (*going to the dresser for the potatoes and looking at the shelves*). What in the earthly world has happened all the delf? Where are the jugs gone and the plates? They were all in it when I went out a while ago.

CHILD (*hanging his head*). We were making a garden with them.

We were making that garden there in the corner.

MOTHER. Is that what you were doing after I bidding you to sit still and to keep yourself quiet? It is to tie you in the chair I will another time! My grand jugs! (*She picks them up and wipes them*) My plates that I bought the first time I ever went marketing into Gort. The best in the shop they were. (*One slips from her hand and breaks*) Look at that now, look what you are after doing.

[*She gives a slap at the Child.*]

TRAVELLING MAN. Do not blame the child. It was I myself took them down from the dresser.

MOTHER (*turning on him*). It was you took them! What business had you doing that? It's the last time a tramp or a tinker or a rogue of the roads will have a chance of laying his hand on anything in this house. It is jailed you should be! What did you want touching the dresser at all? Is it looking you were for what you could bring away?

TRAVELLING MAN (*taking the Child's hands*). I would not refuse these hands that were held out for them. If it was for the four winds of the world he had asked, I would have put their bridles into these innocent hands.

MOTHER (*taking up the jug and throwing the branch on the floor*).

Get out of this! Get out of this I tell you! There is no shelter here for the like of you! Look at that mud on the floor! You are not fit to come into the house of any decent respectable person!

[*The room begins to darken.*]

TRAVELLING MAN. Indeed, I am more used to the roads than

to the shelter of houses. It is often I have spent the night on the bare hills.

MOTHER. No wonder in that! (*She begins to sweep floor*) Go out of this now to whatever company you are best used to, whatever they are. The worst of people it is likely they are, thieves and drunkards and shameless women.

TRAVELLING MAN. Maybe so. Drunkards and thieves and shameless women, stones that have fallen, that are trodden under foot, bodies that are spoiled with sores, bodies that are worn with fasting, minds that are broken with much sinning, the poor, the mad, the bad. . . .

MOTHER. Get out with you! Go back to your friends, I say!

TRAVELLING MAN. I will go. I will go back to the high road that is walked by the bare feet of the poor, by the innocent bare feet of children. I will go back to the rocks and the wind, to the cries of the trees in the storm! [*He goes out.*]

CHILD. He has forgotten his branch!

[*Takes it and follows him.*]

MOTHER (*still sweeping*). My good plates from the dresser, and dirty red mud on the floor, and the sticks all scattered in every place. (*Stoops to pick them up*) Where is the child gone? (*Goes to door*) I don't see him — he couldn't have gone to the river — it is getting dark — the bank is slippery. Come back! Come back! Where are you? [*Child runs in.*]

MOTHER. O where were you? I was in dread it was to the river you were gone, or into the river.

CHILD. I went after him. He is gone over the river.

MOTHER. He couldn't do that. He couldn't go through the flood.

CHILD. He did go over it. He was as if walking on the water. There was a light before his feet.

MOTHER. That could not be so. What put that thought in your mind?

CHILD. I called to him to come back for the branch, and he turned where he was in the river, and he bade me to bring it back, and to show it to yourself.

MOTHER (*taking the branch*). There are fruit and flowers on it
It is a branch that is not of any earthly tree. (*Falls on her
knees*) He is gone, he is gone, and I never knew him! He
was that stranger that gave me all! He is the King of the
World!

ABOUT THE PAGEANT: THE MONTHS

A pageant is a processional display, in which many people have a part. It may be given in celebration of a particular historical event in town, city or nation; it may commemorate the founding of a church or college or similar institution; it may pay tribute to the birthday of a notable person. But always it allows many people to take part, and its costumes give colour to the picture.

In early Elizabethan days — even before — pageantry was a common form of entertainment, of celebration. But, as plays became more and more confined within a roofed playhouse, the action of the drama became less and less expansive, until pageantry, as an art, almost entirely disappeared. In 1905, it was revived in England by the dramatist, Louis N. Parker; since which time it has spread to all localities of the English-speaking race.

In olden times, the people used to dance the seasons in and out, used to sing hymns of praises for the fruit of purple autumn. May-pole rites, Hallowe'en games, Thanksgiving processions were the common enjoyment of the people. Shakespeare wrote, in his day, what were known as chronicle dramas, where display, as in "Henry V", was the dominant characteristic.

Now, I do not believe, when Christina G. Rossetti wrote this little pageant of "The Months", that she had in mind any such extensive display as used to grace the Courts of the early monarchs of England, when the poets wrote masques and the guilds spent lavish sums on mystery pageants, in celebration of Corpus Christi. Miss Rossetti had no such historic sense. She was one of those quaint souls — religious in fervour and holy in thought — who might have stepped from the pages of her favourite novel, Mrs. Gaskell's "Cranford." There was nothing original in her plan: I have near me two pieces of

similar import, — Charles Lamb's "Masque of Days" and Marguerite Merington's "Father Time and His Children"; and at the opera your fathers and mothers remember the brilliant ballet of "The Dance of the Hours."

But I use Miss Rossetti's "Pageant" because, unlike most of the pageants written to-day, it has no special story to tell other than that which comes from a true poet's heart. She has no propaganda to spread. I wanted greatly to use a modern pageant, but they were all too "utilitarian", which means that their language was not poetically imaginative enough, and their symbolism too complicated.

When you are older, you will know more of the relation between Christina and her brother, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, the poet and painter. One of the most beautiful studies, in the period of Lamb and Wordsworth and Rossetti, is that which reveals the devotion existing between brothers and sisters.

THE MONTHS

A PAGEANT

BY CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI

PERSONIFICATIONS

Boys

JANUARY

MARCH

JULY

AUGUST

OCTOBER

DECEMBER

Girls

FEBRUARY

APRIL

MAY

JUNE

SEPTEMBER

NOVEMBER

ROBIN REDBREASTS; LAMBS and SHEEP; NIGHTINGALE and
NESTLINGS

Various Flowers, Fruits, etc.

THE MONTHS

SCENE. *A Cottage with its grounds. A room in a large comfortable cottage; a fire burning on the hearth; a table on which the breakfast things have been left standing. January discovered seated by the fire.*

JANUARY.

Cold the day and cold the drifted snow,
Dim the day until the cold dark night.

[Stirs the fire.]

Crackle, sparkle, fagot; embers glow:
Some one may be plodding through the snow
Longing for a light,
For the light that you and I can show.
If no one else should come,
Here Robin Redbreast's welcome to a crumb,
And never troublesome:
Robin, why don't you come and fetch your crumb?

Here 's butter for my hunch of bread,
And sugar for your crumb;,
Here 's room upon the hearthrug,
If you 'll only come.

In your scarlet waistcoat,
With your keen bright eye,
Where are you loitering?
Wings were made to fly!

Make haste to breakfast,
Come and fetch your crumb,
For I 'm as glad to see you
As you are glad to come.

Two Robin Redbreasts are seen tapping with their beaks at the lattice, which January opens. The birds flutter in, hop about the floor, and peck up the crumbs and sugar thrown to them. They have scarcely finished their meal, when a knock is heard at the door. January hangs a guard in front of the fire, and opens to February, who appears with a bunch of snowdrops in her hand.

JANUARY. Good-morrow, sister.

FEBRUARY.

Brother, joy to you!

I've brought some snowdrops; only just a few,
But quite enough to prove the world awake,
Cheerful and hopeful in the frosty dew
And for the pale sun's sake.

[She hands a few of her snowdrops to January, who retires into the background. While February stands arranging the remaining snowdrops in a glass of water on the window-sill, a soft butting and bleating are heard outside. She opens the door, and sees one foremost lamb, with other sheep and lambs bleating and crowding towards her.]

FEBRUARY.

O you, you little wonder, come — come in,
You wonderful, you woolly soft white lamb.
You panting mother ewe, come too,
And lead that tottering twin
Safe in:
Bring all your bleating kith and kin,
Except the horny ram.

[February opens a second door in the background, and the little flock files through into a warm and sheltered compartment out of sight.]

The lambkin tottering in its walk
With just a fleece to wear;
The snowdrop drooping on its stalk
So slender, —



THE MONTHS

February. — "You wonderful, you woolly soft white lamb."

Snowdrop and lamb, a pretty pair,
Braving the cold for our delight,
Both white,
Both tender.

[A rattling of doors and windows; branches seen without, tossing violently to and fro.

How the doors rattle, and the branches sway!
Here's brother March comes whirling on his way
With winds that eddy and sing.

[She turns the handle of the door, which bursts open, and discloses March hastening up, both hands full of violets and anemones.

FEBRUARY.

Come, show me what you bring;
For I have said my say, fulfilled my day,
And must away.

MARCH (*stopping short on the threshold*).

I blow an arouse,
Through the world's wide house
To quicken the torpid earth:
Grappling I fling
Each feeble thing,
But bring strong life to the birth.
I wrestle and frown,
And topple down;
I wrench, I rend, I uproot;
Yet the violet
Is born where I set
The sole of my flying foot,

[Hands violets and anemones to February, who retires into the background.

And in my wake
Frail wind-flowers quake,
And the catkins promise fruit.
I drive ocean ashore
With rush and roar,

And he cannot say me nay:
 My harp-strings all
 Are the forests tall,
 Making music when I play.
 And as others perforce,
 So I on my course
 Run and needs must run,
 With sap on the mount
 And buds past count
 And rivers and clouds and sun,
 With seasons and breath
 And time and death
 And all that has yet begun.

[Before March has done speaking, a voice is heard approaching, accompanied by a twittering of birds. April comes along singing, and stands outside and out of sight to finish her song.]

APRIL (*outside*).

Pretty little three
 Sparrows in a tree,
 Light upon the wing;
 Though you cannot sing
 You can chirp of Spring:
 Chirp of Spring to me,
 Sparrows, from your tree.

Never mind the showers,
 Chirp about the flowers
 While you build a nest:
 Straws from east and west,
 Feathers from your breast,
 Make the snuggest bowers
 In a world of flowers.

You must dart away
 From the chosen spray,

You intrusive third
Extra little bird;
Join the unwedded herd!
These have done with play,
And must work to-day.

APRIL (*appearing at the open door*).

Good-morrow and good-bye; if others fly,
Of all the flying months you 're the most flying.

MARCH.

You 're hope and sweetness, April.

APRIL.

Birth means dying,
As wings and wind mean flying;
So you and I and all things fly or die;
And sometimes I sit sighing to think of dying.
But meanwhile I 've a rainbow in my showers,
And a lapful of flowers,
And these dear nestlings aged three hours;
And here 's their mother sitting,
Their father 's merely flitting
To find their breakfast somewhere in my bowers.

[*As she speaks April shows March her apron full of flowers and nest full of birds. March wanders away into the grounds. April, without entering the cottage, hangs over the hungry nestlings watching them.*]

APRIL.

What beaks you have, you funny things,
What voices shrill and weak;
Who 'd think that anything that sings
Could sing through such a beak?
Yet you 'll be nightingales one day,
And charm the country-side,
When I 'm away and far away
And May is queen and bride.

[*May arrives unperceived by April, and gives her a kiss. April starts and looks round.*]

APRIL.

Ah May, good-morrow, May, and so good-bye.

MAY.

That 's just your way, sweet April, smile and sigh:
 Your sorrow 's half in fun,
 Begun and done
 And turned to joy while twenty seconds run.
 I 've gathered flowers all as I came along,
 At every step a flower
 Fed by your last bright shower, —

[She divides an armful of all sorts of flowers with April, who strolls away through the garden.]

MAY.

And gathering flowers I listened to the song
 Of every bird in bower.

The world and I are far too full of bliss
 To think or plan or toil or care;
 The sun is waxing strong,
 The days are waxing long,
 And all that is,
 Is fair.

Here are my buds of lily and of rose,
 And here 's my namesake-blossom, May;
 And from a watery spot
 See here forget-me-not,
 With all that blows
 To-day.

Hark to my linnets from the hedges green,
 Blackbird and lark and thrush and dove,
 And every nightingale
 And cuckoo tells its tale,
 And all they mean
 Is love.

[June appears at the further end of the garden, coming slowly towards May, who, seeing her, exclaims]

MAY.

Surely you 're come too early, sister June.

JUNE.

Indeed I feel as if I came too soon
To round your young May moon
And set the world a-gasping at my noon.
Yet come I must. So here are strawberries
Sun-flushed and sweet, as many as you please;
And here are full-blown roses by the score,
More roses, and yet more.

[May, eating strawberries, withdraws among the flower beds.]

JUNE.

The sun does all my long day's work for me,
Raises and ripens everything;
I need but sit beneath a leafy tree
And watch and sing.

[Seats herself in the shadow of a laburnum.]

Or if I 'm lulled by note of bird and bee,
Or lulled by noontide's silence deep,
I need but nestle down beneath my tree
And drop asleep.

[June falls asleep; and is not awakened by the voice of July, who behind the scenes is heard half singing, half calling.]

JULY *(behind the scenes)*.

Blue flags, yellow flags, flags all freckled,
Which will you take? yellow, blue, speckled!
Take which you will, speckled, blue, yellow,
Each in its way has not a fellow.

[Enter July, a basket of many-coloured irises slung upon his shoulders, a bunch of ripe grass in one hand, and a plate piled full of peaches balanced upon the other. He steals up to June, and tickles her with the grass. She wakes.]

JUNE.

What, here already?

JULY.

Nay, my tryst is kept;
The longest day slipped by you while you slept.
I 've brought you one curved pyramid of bloom,

[Hands her the plate.]

Not flowers, but peaches, gathered where the bees,
As downy, bask and boom
In sunshine and in gloom of trees.
But get you in, a storm is at my heels;
The whirlwind whistles and wheels,
Lightning flashes and thunder peals,
Flying and following hard upon my heels.

[June takes shelter in a thickly-woven arbour.]

The roar of a storm sweeps up
From the east to the lurid west,
The darkening sky, like a cup,
Is filled with rain to the brink;
The sky is purple and fire,
Blackness and noise and unrest;
The earth, parched with desire,
Opens her mouth to drink.

Send forth thy thunder and fire,
Turn over thy brimming cup,
O sky, appease the desire
Of earth in her parched unrest;
Pour out drink to her thirst,
Her famishing life lift up;
Make thyself fair as at first,
With a rainbow for thy crest.

Have done with thunder and fire,
O sky with the rainbow crest;
O earth, have done with desire,
Drink, and drink deep, and rest.

[*Enter August, carrying a sheaf made up of different kinds of grain.*

Hail, brother August, flushed and warm
And scatheless from my storm.
Your hands are full of corn, I see,
As full as hands can be:
And earth and air both smell as sweet as balm
In their recovered calm,
And that they owe to me.

[*July retires into a shrubbery.*

AUGUST.

Wheat sways heavy, oats are airy,
Barley bows a graceful head,
Short and small shoots up canary,
Each of these is some one's bread;
Bread for man or bread for beast,
Or at very least
A bird's savory feast.

Men are brethren of each other,
One in flesh and one in food;
And a sort of foster brother
Is the litter, or the brood,
Of that folk in fur or feather,
Who, with men together,
Breast the wind and weather.

[*August describes September toiling across the lawn.*

My harvest home is ended; and I spy
September drawing nigh
With the first thought of Autumn in her eye,
And the first sigh
Of Autumn wind among her locks that fly.

[*September arrives, carrying upon her head a basket heaped high with fruit.*

SEPTEMBER.

Unload me, brother. I have brought a few
Plums and these pears for you,
A dozen kinds of apples, one or two
Melons, some figs all bursting through
Their skins, and pearled with dew
These damsons violet-blue.

[While September is speaking, August lifts the basket to the ground, selects various fruits, and withdraws slowly along the gravel walk, eating a pear as he goes.]

My song is half a sigh
Because my green leaves die;
Sweet are my fruits, but all my leaves are dying;
And well may Autumn sigh,
And well may I
Who watch the sere leaves flying.

My leaves that fade and fall,
I note you one and all;
I call you, and the Autumn wind is calling,
Lamenting for your fall,
And for the pall
You spread on earth in falling.

And here 's a song of flowers to suit such hours:
A song of the last lilies, the last flowers,
Amid my withering bowers.

In the sunny garden bed
Lilies look so pale,
Lilies droop the head
In the shady grassy vale;
If all alike they pine
In shade and in shine,
If everywhere they grieve,
Where will lilies live?

[October enters briskly, some leafy twigs bearing different sorts of nuts in one hand, and a long ripe hop-bine trailing after him from the other. A dahlia is stuck in his buttonhole.

OCTOBER.

Nay, cheer up, sister. Life is not quite over,
Even if the year has done with corn and clover,
With flowers and leaves; besides, in fact it 's true,
Some leaves remain and some flowers too,
For me and you.
Now see my crops:

[Offering his produce to September.

I 've brought you nuts and hops;
And when the leaf drops, why, the walnut drops.

[October wreaths the hop-bine about September's neck, and gives her the nut twigs. They enter the cottage together, but without shutting the door. She steps into the background: he advances to the hearth, removes the guard, stirs up the smouldering fire, and arranges several chestnuts ready to roast.

Crack your first nut and light your first fire,
Roast your first chestnut crisp on the bar;
Make the logs sparkle, stir the blaze higher;
Logs are cheery as sun or as star,
Logs we can find wherever we are.

Spring one soft day will open the leaves,
Spring one bright day will lure back the flowers;
Never fancy my whistling wind grieves,
Never fancy I 've tears in my showers;
Dance, nights and days! and dance on, my hours!

[Sees November approaching.

Here comes my youngest sister, looking dim
And grim,
With dismal ways.
What cheer, November?

NOVEMBER (*entering and shutting the door*).

Nought have I to bring,
Tramping a-chill and shivering,
Except these pine-cones for a blaze, —
Except a fog which follows,
And stuffs up all the hollows, —
Except a hoar frost here and there, —
Except some shooting stars
Which dart their luminous cars
Trackless and noiseless through the keen night air.

[*October, shrugging his shoulders, withdraws into the background, while November throws her pine-cones on the fire, and sits down listlessly.*

The earth lies fast asleep, grown tired
Of all that 's high or deep;
There 's nought desired and nought required
Save a sleep.

I rock the cradle of the earth,
I lull her with a sigh;
And know that she will wake to mirth
By and by.

[*Through the window December is seen running and leaping in the direction of the door. He knocks. November calls out without rising.*

Ah, here 's my youngest brother come at last:
Come in, December.

[*December opens the door and enters, loaded with evergreens in berry, etc.*

Come, and shut the door,
For now it 's snowing fast;
It snows, and will snow more and more;
Don't let it drift in on the floor.
But you, you 're all aglow; how can you be
Rosy and warm and smiling in the cold?

DECEMBER.

Nay, no closed doors for me,
But open doors and open hearts and glee
To welcome young and old.

Dimmest and brightest month am I;
My short days end, my lengthening days begin;
What matters more or less sun in the sky,
When all is sun within?

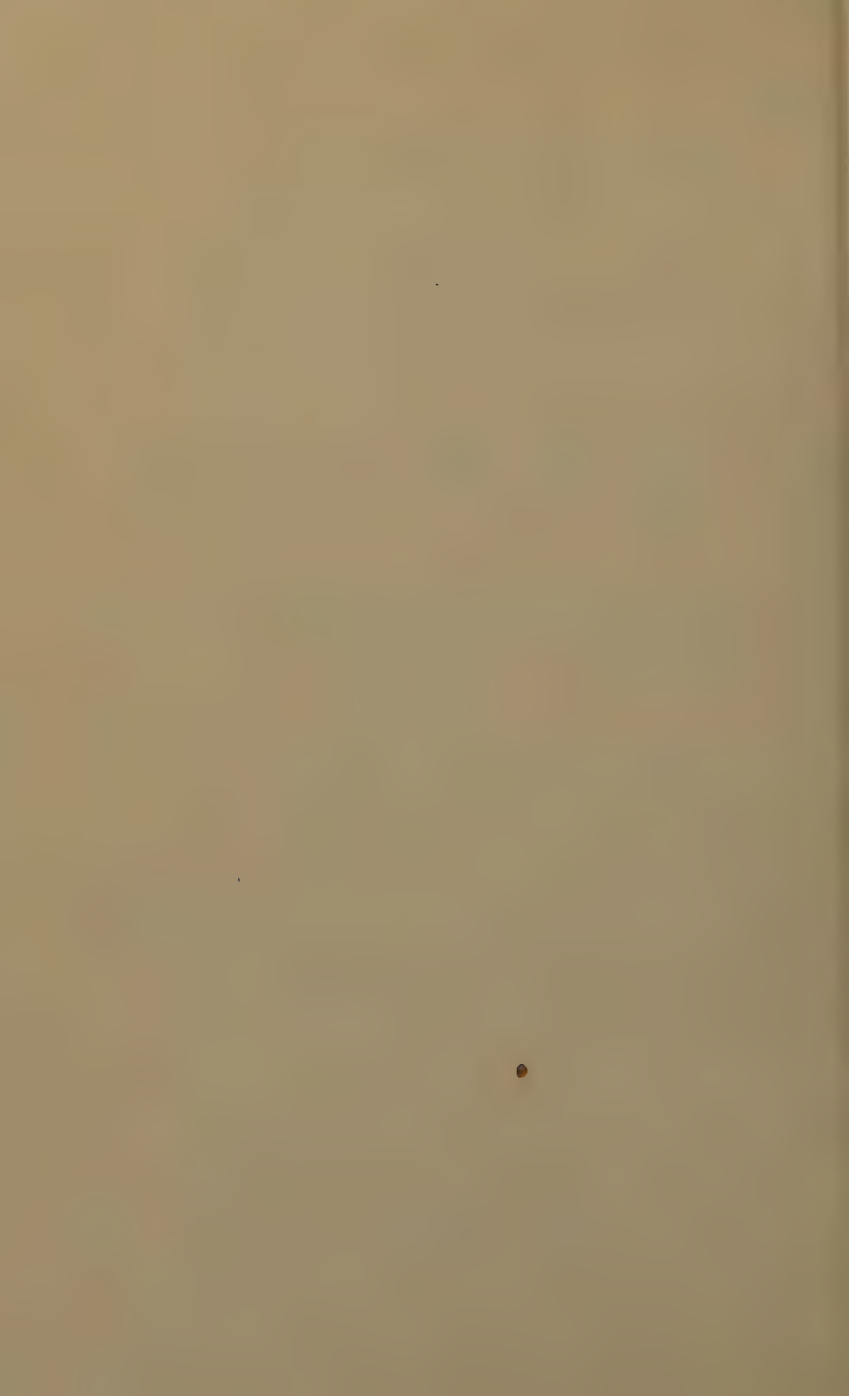
[He begins making a wreath as he sings.]

Ivy and privet dark as night,
I weave with hips and haws a cheerful show,
And holly for a beauty and delight,
And milky mistletoe.

While high above them all I set
Yew twigs and Christmas roses pure and pale;
Then Spring her snowdrop and her violet
May keep, so sweet and frail;

May keep each merry singing bird,
Of all her happy birds that singing build:
For I 've a carol which some shepherds heard
Once in a wintry field.

[While December concludes his song all the other Months troop in from the garden, or advance out of the background. The Twelve join hands in a circle, and begin dancing round to a stately measure as the Curtain falls,



ABOUT THE FOREST RING

There is nothing more enchanting than a Forest Ring. In its magic circle Æsop, LaFontaine, Joel Chandler Harris and Rudyard Kipling have been face to face with the sage wisdom of animals. And it is only in such a place we can ever find out the laws that govern supposedly dumb creatures. Mowgli realized this the night of the famous elephant meet.

"A Midsummer Night's Dream" is a play of wonderful circles, of fairy spells. It is this element that appeals to young folks. And so I have selected "The Forest Ring" because it makes legitimate use of this great attraction — the moment of transformation, when life passes from a reality into a dream that is true. Does not Tennyson say — "Dreams are true while they last, and do we not live in dreams?" And did not Peter Pan believe in fairies and remain the Eternal Boy?

Mr. DeMille and Mr. Barnard have both written plays for the larger theater of grown-ups, and Mr. DeMille has had a strong hand in the development of the moving-picture. Whether or not he revives his interest in the establishment of a Children's Theater, I do not know; but "The Forest Ring" was definitely written for such a place, and was among the first plays given by Mrs. Minnie Herts Heniger, at the Children's Educational Theater. "The Little Princess" was another. Mr. DeMille's play is here selected as an American contrast to its English cousin, "Pinkie and the Fairies."

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THE FOREST RING

A PLAY IN THREE ACTS

BY WILLIAM C. DEMILLE AND CHARLES BARNARD

CHARACTERS

Fairies

ARBUTUS, *a poor but honest Fairy Queen*
MOSS BUD, *her daughter*
PEACH BLOOM, *the Queen's attendant*
MOUSE EAR, *The Queen's attendant*
QUICKSILVER, *a fairy messenger-boy*

Animals

URSA, *a bear*
ANTLERS, *a deer*
WHITE FACE, *a fox*
BLINKERS, *an owl*

Human Beings

JANE ADAMS, *a New York girl spending her vacation in the
Adirondacks*
AUNT SABRINA WATSON, *a widow*
THOMAS, *her son*
HANK STRUBLE, *trapper and pot-hunter. In love with Aunt
Sabrina*

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THE FOREST RING

ACT I

SCENE. *A Fairy Ring in the forest, by moonlight. Soft music, imitating sounds of crickets, tree-toads, and katydids. The Ring marked by an arc of a circle of light. Moonlight through foliage. Music through first scene. Hollow tree up left. Curtain discovers Arbutus asleep, with Peach Bloom and Mouse Ear asleep at her feet.*

Mouse Ear wakes up, looks about and falls asleep again. Peach Bloom wakes and listens, and then wakes Mouse Ear.

PEACH BLOOM (*to Mouse Ear*).

Hark! What distant sound is that I hear?

It cannot be a stranger ventures near!

Wake, sister, for our vigil must not cease —

MOUSE EAR (*sleepily*).

'Tis nothing. Can't you let me sleep in peace?

PEACH BLOOM.

Wake up! I fancied that I something heard.

MOUSE EAR (*drowsily*).

'Twas but the drowsy summer wind that stirred.

PEACH BLOOM.

I'm sure I heard a footstep in the dell.

MOUSE EAR.

'Tis but the tinkle of some cowslip's bell.

PEACH BLOOM.

Ah, well — the night sounds always seem quite new;

(*Music stops*)

It must have been a wood-sprite in the — in the —

What rhymes with new, Mouse Ear?

MOUSE EAR (*yawns*). Oh, I don't know! What's the use of talking in verse, anyhow? These modern folks have knocked all the poetry out of our business, and I'm going to use everyday prose after this. Why, they even say there *are* no fairies.

PEACH BLOOM. Hush! Don't let Arbutus hear you say that.

MOUSE EAR. Why not? Everybody knows it.

PEACH BLOOM. Yes, I know. But, for the last seventy-five or eighty years, she has been worrying herself sick because people don't believe in us. It was bad enough when grown-ups forgot us, but now even children do not believe in fairies.

MOUSE EAR. Well, what can we do? Modern folks won't believe in us until they've seen us. And you know it's against the fairy law for us to show ourselves to anyone who doesn't believe in us, — isn't it?

PEACH BLOOM. Ah, times have changed since the good old days before Jack's bean-stalk withered away!

MOUSE EAR. Yes, — then we used to get our salary every ten or fifteen years, but now it's only paid by the century!

PEACH BLOOM. Yes, and it hasn't been paid at all since the day St. George killed the dragon.

[*Both sigh.*]

MOUSE EAR. Poor Queen, — she tries *so* hard to make both ends meet.

PEACH BLOOM. Hush, what's that?

MOUSE EAR. There's something coming through the glade —

PEACH BLOOM. I knew I heard something.

[*Both rise and cross to left of stage.*]

MOUSE EAR (*looking off*). It looks like a fairy —

PEACH BLOOM. It *is* a fairy.

MOUSE EAR. Why — it's Moss Bud!

PEACH BLOOM. It can't be; — she's at boarding-school.

MOUSE EAR. It is, though. Let's go and meet her —

PEACH BLOOM (*detaining her*). We mustn't leave the Queen.

BOTH (*calling softly*). Moss Bud! Moss Bud!

[*Enter Moss Bud, running lightly across the stage; she embraces Peach Bloom and Mouse Ear.*]

MOSS BUD. Peach Bloom — Mouse Ear! Oh, how good it is to be home again! Where's mamma?

MOUSE EAR. There. But Her Majesty gave express orders that she was not to be awakened until Quicksilver returned.

MOSS BUD. Why, where has he gone?

PEACH BLOOM. Arbutus sent him out with orders not to come back until he had found some man, woman or child who believes in fairies.

MOSS BUD. Poor mamma — the same old trouble —

MOUSE EAR. But tell us, why are you home from school?

MOSS BUD. Why, don't you know? This is my birth-night and I'm fifty thousand years old!

PEACH BLOOM. So it is. My! you're getting to be quite a big girl. It's too bad the others are not here.

MOSS BUD. Why, where are the others?

MOUSE EAR (*confidentially*). They're all boarding at the seaside for the summer. You see, business is so bad just now that Her Majesty couldn't afford to open her summer palace at Coral Reef, so she's staying quietly at home, with nobody to attend her but Peach Bloom, Quicksilver and me.

MOSS BUD. I suppose Quicksilver is getting to be quite a big boy now.

PEACH BLOOM. Yes, but he never had to work so hard before. He only got the position of fairy messenger, because his uncle, Mercury, was the messenger of the gods. His "Uncle Merc" left him his wingèd shoes, but the careless boy lost one of them in the haunted pool, and whenever he tries to use the other he goes round and round in a circle!

[*They laugh.*]

PEACH BLOOM. Here they come.

[*Enter Arbutus.*]

ARBUTUS (*waking up*). Peach Bloom, Mouse Ear —

PEACH BLOOM AND MOUSE EAR (*crossing to her*). Yes, your Majesty.

ARBUTUS. Has Quicksilver returned yet?

MOUSE EAR. No, your Majesty — but somebody else has.

ARBUTUS. Who? What do you mean?

MOSS BUD (*coming forward*). Don't you know me, Mamma?

ARBUTUS. Why, Moss Bud! My darling child, how you have grown! I've been so worried over business trouble, that I quite forgot you were coming back to-night. (*Embracing her*) Welcome home again. I have sent for you in order to talk over serious matters. (*Moss Bud makes a face*) To begin with, how would you like to leave school for good?

MOSS BUD. Oh, Mamma, may I really? I'm so tired of being a school sprite, and I *do* want to be a real grown-up fairy.

ARBUTUS. Well, my dear, you shall be! This is your birth-night, and, although you are only fifty thousand years old and have not yet outgrown your girlish ways, still I have decided to admit you to full-fledged fairyhood — and teach you all the fairy duties. But I do not conceal from you that this doesn't mean as much as it once did. The fairy business is on the wane. In fact, we couldn't even make you a birthday cake because we couldn't afford to buy fifty thousand candles.

MOSS BUD. Never mind, Mamma. If the mortals do not believe in us, we can at least believe in ourselves.

ARBUTUS. True, my child, but I'm getting disgusted with mortals. We fairies are helpless unless children have faith in us, and now all our hard work is in vain because the wise child of to-day, with all his learning, can't see us all around him! But it's got to stop! If Quicksilver is successful this time, I shall retire from the fairy business, and, as you will succeed me on the throne, you shall learn, to-night, the use of the magic fairy wand, and the secret of the Ring. Peach Bloom, get my wand out of the camphor chest. It's been so long since I used it I've almost forgotten how. (*Peach Bloom brings out wand and polishes it. The wand glows with electrical effects when Arbutus uses it*) Come, my daughter, give me your last kiss as a sprite — before you become a fairy!

[*Moss Bud kisses her and kneels, with Peach Bloom on one side and Mouse Ear on the other. Arbutus raises the wand over her in speaking the following, to soft music.*

Hear now, my child, that secret which, of old,
We guarded well, and which is never told
Without consent of Fairy Queen or King —
Hear now the secret of the Forest Ring.

Fairy of man, who knows the secret rare,
Can see all creatures of the earth and air,
Each as he is; and not as he appears
To those who have not fairy eyes and ears.

For every creature is a human thing
Who, when he is outside the magic Ring,
Is forced to wear the shape of beast or bird,
And cannot speak a single human word.

But every creature who shall make his way
Into the Ring, before the dawn of day
Is able, by the circle's magic powers,
To wear his human shape a few short hours.

Within the Forest Ring all quarrels cease —
For all who enter it must be at peace
Among themselves, and every living thing
Is safe, when once within the Forest Ring.

Take now this secret, Moss Bud, and beware
Lest any undeserving mortal dare
To steal it from you: For I bid you stand
A sprite no more — but Princess of our band.

(*Arbutus raises Moss Bud, and gives wand to Peach Bloom.*
To the others) Salute your Princess. (*Peach Bloom and*
Mouse Ear kneel and kiss Moss Bud's hand) Now, my child,
do you understand the secret?

MOSS BUD. I think so. You mean that when wild animals
come into the Ring, they look and talk just like human beings?

ARBUTUS. Yes, or rather that in the Ring they wear their
true shapes, which are human.

[*Music stops.*

MOUSE EAR (*looking off*). Your Majesty, three wild creatures are approaching the Ring.

ARBUTUS. Can you see who they are?

PEACH BLOOM. Yes — Antlers, White Face, and Blinkers.

ARBUTUS (*to Moss Bud*). Now, my child, you shall see how the magic power of the Ring transforms all creatures into their true selves.

[*Enter, at back, Antlers, White Face, and Blinkers. They appear as men, each wearing around him the skin of the animal he represents. They cross and bow to the Queen.*]

ANTLERS (*roughly*). Arbutus, we come for justice!

WHITE FACE (*putting him aside*). One moment, my dear friends.

Good evening, your Majesty. May I hope your Majesty is as well as your Majesty's appearance is charming?

BLINKERS (*stands and nods sleepily and wisely*). Um — Um —

ARBUTUS. Be welcome, friends. How can I help you?

ANTLERS. We refuse to submit any longer to —

WHITE FACE (*stopping him*). My very dear fellow — let me explain. Your Majesty, we have the honour to be a committee from the wild creatures of the forest, and we are sent to ask you to help us against a trapper who is violating the forest law by killing more than he can use! Things have come to such a pass, your Majesty, that we cannot leave our homes, to find food for our children, without great danger that, when we return, we will find the dead bodies of our little ones — which the unbeastly monster has skinned and thrown away —

ANTLERS. It's worse than unbeastly — it's positively human!

We won't stand it, Arbutus! We insist —

WHITE FACE (*stopping him*). Please — please — (To Arbutus)

We can understand, your Majesty, that a man must kill to eat; and, since he has such a useless skin of his own, that he should desire to keep out the cold with one of ours. But this trapper takes the skins of our little ones, and sends them away —

BLINKERS (*waking up*). And feathers — feathers — and tails — and heads of little owls — Ugh! —

[*Dozes again.*]

ANTLERS. We want to kill him. It's his life or ours! We want you to tell us how to ——

WHITE FACE (*soothing him*). All right, all right —— And so, your Majesty, the wild creatures thought that perhaps you could suggest some way of causing these outrages to stop before we are all killed.

ARBUTUS. My poor friends, I have often wondered how I could help you. Have any of you thought of a plan of action?

ANTLERS. Yes! Only let me meet him, when he has left his gun at home, and I promise you there will be no more trouble ——

WHITE FACE. Yes, but he is never without his gun. Now, I think that some nice, gentlemanly way would be much better —— something without noise or bloodshed —— such as putting poison in his well or ——

ARBUTUS. No, no, fairies can have nothing to do with any such action. What do you say, Blinkers, —— you, the wisest of all birds?

BLINKERS (*waking up*). Eh —— oh —— I think —— if you want to stop it —— it must be stopped —— by —— by —— stopping it —— then it will stop ——

MOSS BUD. Oh, Mamma, I know. Let me use the magic wand and enchant the bad trapper.

ARBUTUS. No, my child, it would be useless ——

MOSS BUD. Why?

ARBUTUS. Because, in order that the wand may have magic power when used in human affairs, it can only be used at the request of some child who believes in fairies. This is one of those cases in which nothing can be done until such a child is found.

ANTLERS. A *good* child who believes in fairies. Well, that settles us —— there's no such thing as a good child!

MOSS BUD. Oh, yes, there must be. Quicksilver will surely find one to-night.

PEACH BLOOM (*who has been watching*). Your Majesty, there is a man coming towards the Ring.

ALL. A man!

BLINKERS (*frightened*). A man — well — very sorry — good-night.

[*Starts to go.*]

ARBUTUS. Wait, Blinkers — everyone is safe in the Ring Hide among the trees until we see who it is. It may be some one who believes in fairies.

[*Animals and Fairies hide. Enter Hank Struble, the trapper, armed with a gun, a huge hunting-knife in his belt. He steals up to the cave and looks in cautiously. Examines the ground in front of the cave.*]

HANK (*looking at tracks*). By mighty! If this ain't the identical cave where I bagged them three cubs this mornin'! The old bar hain't come back yet — eh? Waal, I guess I might 's well wait here for her, an' make a clean job of the whole family. Lemme see, ef I git five dollars apiece for the cubs' skins, the ole bar's ought to fetch ten. How Sabriny will stare when I give her twenty-five dollars fur a weddin' present! I guess things is all fixed at last. Sabriny said to come 'round to-morrow mornin', an' if she hadn't changed her mind by then I could tell folks we was engaged. (*Setting himself down on the ground with gun ready to fire*) I hope them 'air cubs won't keep Sabriny awake all night. They did make a powerful squealin' when I locked 'em up in her cellar; the'r safe enough though, unless they can break that air newfangled Yale lock. Lemme see, where'd I put that key? (*Feeling in his pockets*) Oh, here it is — that letter from New York offerin' me five dollars fur every cub skin I could git. Just come in handy. Feller writ that he wants to make 'em inter floor-mats — cover the bare spots in the settin'-room carpet, I s'pose. (*Laughs*) Don't that beat all — (*Shivers*) By mighty, nights is getting considerable chilly; must be past midnight — (*Yawns*) I'll just lie down a spell. 'Ef the old bar comes back, I guess I kin hear her in time to shoot — (*Yawns*) Ain't it queer how the woods make a feller feel — sorter drowsy — (*Nods*) Cur'us how the pine trees are whisperrin'

together 's if they was talkin' in their sleep — sounds just like . . .

[Falls asleep, with the upper part of his body in the Ring. Animals and Fairies come down.

ANTLERS (*creeps up and looks carefully at Hank*). That's the man, — I'd know him anywhere. Now, I've got him just where I want him! (*Advances threateningly*). I'll just stamp his life out before —

ARBUTUS. Stop, Antlers. Don't you see he is in the Ring? You dare not touch him!

WHITE FACE. But, your Majesty, he's only half in the Ring! Couldn't we kill the outside half?

ARBUTUS. No, the law of the Ring cannot be broken.

ANTLERS. But did you hear what he said? He's stolen Ursa's children, and now he's waiting here to shoot Ursa. It will be some comfort to her, when she finds her babies gone, if I give her the body of the man who stole them.

ARBUTUS. Ursa mustn't find him here; she would attack him as soon as he left the Ring, and he would kill her.

MOSS BUD. Oh, Mamma, I know how to get him away. Let's give him a dream!

ARBUTUS. A very good idea. See what dreams there are in the dreamery.

MOSS BUD (*goes to hollow tree and calls down through knot-hole*).

Hello! Down there in the dreamery, have you any good strong dreams on hand? (*Puts ear to knot-hole*) Yes — there is a fresh batch of plum pudding dreams just in from the factory. (*Through the knot-hole*) Just send up the strongest you've got, please. (*Takes a small paper parcel out of the knot-hole*) Here it is, Mamma, — Number 13A.

ARBUTUS. Well, Moss Bud, see if you can use it without a mistake.

[Moss Bud takes package and opens it; sprinkles imaginary contents over Hank, and makes mystic signs over him. All watch him intently. Hank begins to groan and toss. Animals are delighted. His symptoms get worse, until, with a cry, he wakes up, grasps his gun and rushes off. Fairies laugh.

ANTLERS. I shall never have another chance like that!

WHITE FACE. I still think the law of the Ring might have been stretched a little.

BLINKERS (*waking up*). Eh? Umph? What was stretched?
[*Goes to sleep again.*]

MOSS BUD. Oh, Mamma, here comes poor Ursa; she doesn't know yet that her babies are gone.

ARBUTUS. Well, I can do nothing until I find a child who believes in us.

[*Ursa, the bear, enters, and goes up to cave. She appears as a bear, and exits into cave. All watch mouth of cave. A growling is heard.*]

ANTLERS. She's discovered her loss!

[*Enter Ursa from the cave, as a bear. She rushes behind rock, through which the Ring passes, and reappears in the Ring as a strong young woman, with a bearskin wrapped around her. She is in great distress and rushes over to Arbutus.*]

URSA. Arbutus — my babies — where are they? (*Arbutus is silent*) Where are they, I say? (*Turning to others*) Are you all dumb? Where are they?

WHITE FACE. Why, perhaps they've just strayed off and been lost; we can —

ANTLERS (*interrupting*). No, White Face, this is a time for the truth — (*To Ursa*) Where are they? Where are all our children? Where are Blinkers' four little ones? Where are the two sons of White Face? Where is my little fawn? Come here, — do you see those tracks?

URSA. A man!

ANTLERS. When you see the footprints of a man, need you ask where your children are?

URSA. No, no! Not that — Arbutus —

ARBUTUS. Ursa, you are only one of many weeping forest mothers.

URSA. My babies, my little babies! Why have they robbed me? I never hurt a man —

ANTLERS. Because they kill for the love of killing! What

matters it to them if every shot leaves a vacant place in cave or tree; they must have their "sport."

URSA. Very well, then *I* shall kill for the love of killing. As he has treated my children, so I will treat his. Hundreds of times have I found his young ones in the woods, and passed them unnoticed. But, from this time on, let him beware how he sends them into the forest. My babies killed —

MOSS BUD (*crossing to comfort her*). No, Ursa, they're not killed.

URSA. How do you know?

MOSS BUD. The wicked trapper came here to shoot you, and we heard him say that your babies were locked up there.

URSA (*to the animals*). The man was here, and you let him go alive? Antlers, White Face, is this the brotherhood of the forest?

ANTLERS. We could do nothing. He was in the Ring.

URSA. Then, if they are still alive, we may rescue them — but how? Blinkers, you are wise, — tell me how to save my little ones!

BLINKERS (*waking up*). What? Eh? Oh, yes — it must be stopped. I told Arbutus how, — ask her.

[*Goes to sleep again.*]

URSA (*to Arbutus*). Will you use your magic power to help my babies?

ARBUTUS. Alas! Unless Quicksilver brings me the news I wish, I can do nothing.

[*Ursa is in despair; Moss Bud comforts her.*]

QUICKSILVER (*outside*). Halloo! Halloo! Make way for Quicksilver, the messenger of the Fairy Queen.

[*All listen attentively.*]

ARBUTUS. At last!

MOSS BUD. Oh, I'm sure he brings good news!

ARBUTUS. I'm almost afraid to ask. Hurry up, hurry up!

(*All show their impatience. Enter Quicksilver; slowly sauntering across the stage, he deliberately kneels before Arbutus*)

Well, get up — get up — what news?

ALL. Yes, what news?

QUICKSILVER (*drawling*). News? Oh, yes. The Queen of

Cobweb Ring told me to tell you that she has found a girl who believes in fairies.

[*All overjoyed.*]

ARBUTUS. Thank Heaven! I am no longer powerless! Who is she? Where does she live?

QUICKSILVER. Who? Where? (*Feels in his clothes*) Now, I had the name and address written on a maple leaf, but I stopped to play with some tadpoles, and I declare I must have lost it!

[*All collapse. Exit Quicksilver.*]

ARBUTUS. Oh, Heavens, — that boy will drive me wild! Moss Bud, ring up Cobweb. Ring on the grape-vine telephone.

MOSS BUD (*takes a flower hanging from a vine and uses it as a telephone*). Hello, Central. Give me one — four — three — Pine. Hello — that Cobweb Ring? Yes, what? Oh! Just got back to-night. Thanks. Arbutus wants the name of the girl who believes in fairies. What? Yes, but he lost it. What? All right. Cloverdale Farm? Yes, all right, — good-bye. — The Queen says that the girl is named Jane Adams, and a mosquito messenger reports that he has just left her asleep in her room at Cloverdale Farm, but that the window is wide open.

ARBUTUS. Now, Moss Bud, you may see what you can do with the magic wand. (*Peach Bloom brings it*) Take it and bring the child here without waking her.

MOSS BUD (*waving wand*). Bed at Cloverdale Farm — rise slowly and float out of the window — down through the front yard — up the path to the woods. *Look out!* gracious, it almost ran into a big pine tree! Come through the forest carefully — through the glade to the Forest Ring — enter the Ring — stop —

[*As Moss Bud speaks the last words, enter a single bed, with Jane Adams asleep on it, her clothes hanging over the end.*]

URSA. A human child!

[*Advances threateningly.*]

ARBUTUS. Ursa, you are in the Ring. Besides, on this child you must place all hope of getting back *your* children. (*Looks*

at Jane) Ah, child, it has been years since I could appear to a human being. Come, Moss Bud, waken her.

BLINKERS. Eh — Wake — Who?

[Others hurry him up stage as he dozes again. Moss Bud whispers to Arbutus.

ARBUTUS. True — I forgot. (*Moss Bud waves her wand over Jane and her clothes fly off end of bed and disappear under the bed clothes*) Now waken her.

[*Arbutus looks tenderly at Jane as Moss Bud waves wand and Jane wakens. Animals retire and Fairies regard Jane.*

JANE (*waking*). My, how fresh the air is! Hello! Where's the ceiling? Why, I'm in the woods! I must have been walking in my sleep. No, sleep-walkers don't carry their beds with them. Goodness, when Aunt Sabrina finds out that I've taken this bed off into the woods she'll —

[*Sees Moss Bud and stops, astonished.*

MOSS BUD. Don't be frightened, Jane — you are quite safe with us.

JANE. Oh, I wasn't frightened; only, I *would* like to know where I am and who you are!

MOSS BUD. My name is Moss Bud, and I am a fairy princess. (*Rather proudly*) I brought you here by magic.

JANE. Oh, goody! Are you a real live fairy and not only a dream? Can I really touch you and not wake up?

MOSS BUD. Yes, indeed. Take my hand and I will present you to mamma; she's the Fairy Queen.

JANE. Wait a minute — I can't get up — I'm not — (*Seeing her clothes*) Yes, I am, too — well, if that isn't the funniest thing!

MOSS BUD. That's magic too — (*Jane takes her hand and rises*) Mamma, this is Jane Adams, the girl we have been waiting for.

ARBUTUS. Welcome, my child. I have been expecting you for a very long time. Tell me yourself — do you really believe in fairies?

JANE. Why, of course I do! But I didn't think they were like this. Why, you're lots nicer than I expected! No, I

don't mean that. I mean you're almost as nice as regular girls —

[Enter Quicksilver.

QUICKSILVER. I've got it, your Majesty — the girl's name is Jane Adams — and she lives at —

MOUSE EAR. Be careful, Quixy — if you work so hard in this hot weather, you'll get moonstroke —

JANE. Who is that, Moss Bud?

MOSS BUD. That is Quicksilver, our messenger; *there* are Peach Bloom and Mouse Ear — the rest of the girls are away for the summer.

JANE. Why, this must be a Fairy Ring — like the one I read about in my fairy stories!

MOSS BUD. Yes, it is. But do you know the *secret* of the Forest Ring?

JANE. You mean about the animals not being really animals but having feelings like ours? Oh, yes.

ARBUTUS. Then, Jane, I may tell you why you were brought here to-night. (*Beckons to Ursa*) This is Ursa, a mother bear, who has just been robbed of her little ones.

JANE. Oh, I'm so sorry! But wait, were they three little brown cubs?

URSA. Cubs! Cubs! My children were three as well beloved *babies* as a mother could wish for.

JANE. Oh, excuse me — but I know where they are!

URSA. You do? Are they safe?

JANE. Yes, — but I'm afraid they're very hungry — they haven't had anything to eat since Hank brought them home.

URSA. Oh! — But can we get at them?

JANE. Why, they're locked in the cellar of Aunt Sabrina's house. There's only one door to it, and Hank carries the key to it in his pocket.

URSA. Take me to them; if it's only breaking a door in —

JANE. Oh, but you couldn't! Hank would shoot you before you could do anything, and, besides, the door is too strong.

MOSS BUD. We could open the door by magic.

JANE. But Hank would follow the tracks and shoot the cu — the children.

ARBUTUS. Well, we must do something before long —

JANE. I know what — (*To Ursa*) Can you dance?

URSA. Dance? Dance like a trained bear?

JANE. That's all very well, Ursa, but if you want to save your babies you can't be so very particular.

URSA. You are right — I'm sorry — go on —

JANE. Well, then, can you dance?

URSA. To get back my babies I can do anything.

JANE. Very well. Now listen. You come back to the house with me, and let me put a chain and collar on you. (*Ursa starts up indignantly and then subsides*) Then, when anybody sees us, you can dance, and I'll say you are my tame bear; then, when no one is looking, we can get the key — somehow — and I'll unlock the cellar door — and when we get to the edge of the woods, I'll take off the chain, and you and the little ones can run home to your cave.

URSA. Yes, we could do that. I'll be a trained bear for you — but if anyone else dares to touch the chain I'll —

JANE. Now, look here! If I'm going to help you out in this, you've got to do just as I say. Will you promise?

URSA. Well, but — yes — yes, I promise!

JANE. Well, then, remember this — that, whatever happens, you must not hurt a single man, woman or child.

URSA. But, if they hurt my babies, I'll —

ARBUTUS. You must promise, Ursa, or we cannot help you.

URSA. Well, then — I promise.

JANE. All right. I'll take you back with me to-night, and you can stay in my room.

ARBUTUS. My dear, you're a child after the fairy heart.

[*Ursa talks aside with Peach Bloom and Mouse Ear.*]

JANE (*to Arbutus*). Now, your Majesty, do you think it is safe for me to take this bear among people? I really don't know her.

ARBUTUS. Well, my child, I know she is good and kind in the

forest, but I am afraid that if a naughty boy should begin teasing her she might forget her promise.

JANE. Couldn't you send a fairy along to prevent any trouble?

ARBUTUS. Yes, I can send Peach Bloom with the magic wand; she would see that you came to no harm.

MOSS BUD. Oh, Mamma, do let me go — I would be just as careful! See how safely I brought the bed here.

ARBUTUS. Oh, my dear, I'm afraid you haven't had experience enough. Remember, you're only fifty thousand years old!

MOSS BUD. Oh, but I know I can do it, and I like Jane so much! I want to help her save the little bears.

JANE. Yes, your Majesty — I'm sure we could get along all right.

ARBUTUS. Well, as this is your birth-night, I suppose I must consent. But here, take this little book — "Every Man His Own Fairy" — and if you get into any trouble, you will find all the fairy rules and charms in it. Here is the wand, Moss Bud, — be very careful of it and don't use it unless you have to. Now, Ursa, remember your promise.

ANTLERS (*coming down*). It's nearly dawn. We must be off. (*To Ursa*) Good-bye, sister, and good luck.

WHITE FACE. Let me wish you every success in your undertaking.

BLINKERS. What? Eh? Going away? Well, take care of yourself.

MOSS BUD. Come on, Jane and Ursa.

[*They get on the bed.*]

ARBUTUS. Good-bye, Jane. You are going on a dangerous errand of mercy, and I wish you fairy good fortune.

JANE. Good-bye, your Majesty, I'm sure we'll succeed. Good-bye all.

[*Bed starts to move. The moon goes under a cloud, and the stage becomes dark.*]

ALL. Good-bye! — Good luck! — Good-bye!

[*Their voices are heard getting fainter and fainter. Lights up gradually on empty stage. Sunrise. Fairy music.*]

CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE. *The front yard before Aunt Sabrina Watson's house, with view of porch and front door. Over the door is a second-story window, open. At left of house door is a cellar door leading to cellar under house. This door is closed and locked with a Yale lock. Old-fashioned sweep well and bucket.*

TIME. *Early morning. Curtain music, Grieg's Morgenstim-mung. Curtain rises on empty stage. A pause.*

Enter Thomas from house, with a book in one hand, which he is eagerly reading, and a water bucket in the other. He puts bucket under well spout, and reads.

THOMAS (*reading*). "Takin' careful aim, Buckskin Bill, the boy bear hunter, pulled the trigger, and with a deafenin' report the tremenjus animile fell over on its side and expired." Gosh! Ain't that jest great, though!

SABRINA (*outside*). Thoma-as! Thoma-as!! ——

THOMAS. Yes'm — I'm comin'. (*He draws a bucket of water and starts reading again*) "Suddenly the bushes parted, and with noiseless tread his old enemy, the injun, stood before him." (*Looking up*) Geemunny! (*Reading eagerly*) "Throwing aside his now useless weepoon, Buckskin grasped his trusty knife, an' lookin' the Chief right in the eyes said ——"

SABRINA (*outside*). Land sakes, Thomas! — air you waitin' to dig a new well out there? (*Enter Aunt Sabrina from house*) Didn't I tell you I was waitin' for that water to make the tea for breakfast? Well, if that shiftless boy ain't reading again! Mighty souls, I guess if I want anything done around here I might's well make up my mind to do it myself. (*Thomas, absorbed in book, does not notice her. She comes angrily and takes bucket*) Why, what on airth's the boy readin'? Thomas! (*Thomas starts and tries to hide the book*) Thomas — where'd you get that book?

THOMAS. Why — one of them city fellers give it to me. It's all about bars and things, and it's a sight more interestin'

than that "Pilgrim Progress" you gave me last Christmus. Say, Ma, I want to be a bar hunter.

SABRINA. Humph, you'd better learn how to do your chores right before you start out to shoot wild critters — (*Turning toward house*) Ain't that Jane Adams come down yet?

THOMAS. No'm, I hain't see her.

SABRINA (*calls up to window*). Jane — Jane! — (*No answer*) It does beat all how them city folks can lie abed and sleep mornings.

THOMAS. Say, Ma, kin — kin I go out with Hank to-morrow? I jest know I kin shoot a bar.

SABRINA. Humph! — that's what comes of readin' them good-for-nothin' city books; — these bar stories is all foolishness anyhow. There used to be quite some bars round here, but since Hank's been gittin' after 'em they've got scurcer than lay-locks in January. I don't believe there's ben a bar within five miles o' this house in ten years. (*Here the bear's head appears at Jane's window and she listens with interest. They do not observe the bear*) Hank did ketch three cubs yestiddy, and the next time he wants to use my cellar for a bar-pen he'll have to do a powerful lot of persuadin'!

THOMAS. Oh, Ma, won't you just let me have one peek at 'em?

SABRINA. You'll have to wait till Hank comes — he's got the key. (*Smelling*) Mighty souls, them pop-overs is burnin'. [*Exit hurriedly with pail. Thomas, greatly excited, tries to look between the cracks of cellar door at cubs.*]

THOMAS. If I could only see them as plain as I smell 'em!
[*Enter Hank at back with gun, etc.*]

HANK. Mornin', Thomas. Widder Watson to hum?

THOMAS. Yep — she's gettin' breakfast. Say, Hank, won't you tell me how you ketched them cubs — an' lemme see 'em?

HANK. Tell you what I'll do, Thomas; if you'll tell your ma to come out here for a minute and then clear out fur a while yourself, I'll let you help me skin them cubs after breakfast!

THOMAS. All right. (*Starts to go*) Say, Hank —

HANK. What?

THOMAS. What do you want me to clear out fur?

HANK. Why —— Go on, now; — don't ask questions an' mebbe I'll take you huntin' next week. (*Thomas exits. Hank looks around and shudders*) Ugh! By mighty, ef that warn't the all-powerfullest dream that ever war dreamt — it warn't fur from it.

[*Enter Sabrina.*]

SABRINA. Mornin', Mr. Struble. You're jest in time for breakfast. Why, mighty souls, man — you look as if you'd been used to harrer a field with!

HANK. Mornin', Sabriny — I ben out in the woods all night after the mother of them cubs.

SABRINA. Humph, you look more as if the mother o' them cubs had been after you.

HANK (*shudders*). Sabriny — do you — do you b'leeve dreams ever come true?

SABRINA. They dew say that if you tell a dream before breakfast, it'll come true inside of a week. Why, have *you* been havin' a dream?

HANK. Sabriny — I didn't know there *was* dreams like I had last night!

SABRINA. What was it all about?

HANK. I ain't agoin' to tell you nothin' 'bout it till after breakfast.

SABRINA. Well, I didn't git a chance to dream none, if I'd a wanted to — with them three cubs a celebratin' Fourth o' July and Thanksgivin' all night long!

HANK. I'm really sorry, Sabriny, if they bothered you any. Pappy White's comin' over to help me kill 'em this mornin'. But that dream o' mine was the dod beatenest dream ——

SABRINA. Well, you know I told you what'd happen if you eat that extry half-dozen doughnuts fer supper.

HANK. It wasn't a doughnut dream, Sabriny. Besides, *your* doughnuts couldn't give a feller a dream like that — not ef he sh'd eat a hundred of 'em.

SABRINA (*very much pleased*). Well, what do you s'pose 'twas?

HANK. I'll tell you, Sabriny; — I believe it was because I'd been worryin' so about your answer. (*Sabrina starts away;*

he catches her hand.) Don't go, Sabriny. You told me you'd let me know this mornin'. Jest say "yes", Sabriny, an' I'll —

THOMAS (*entering suddenly*). Say, Hank, can't I see them cubs now?

SABRINA (*drawing her hand away quickly*). Breakfast's jest about ready, Mr. Struble. You stay and have some with us —

[*Exit into house.*]

THOMAS. Can't I see them cubs now, Hank?

HANK. Thomas Watson, — I'd like ter send *your* skin to New York with them cubs!

THOMAS. But Hank, can't I see them cubs?

HANK. No — you can't! (*Bear's head appears at window unnoticed by them*) Them cubs is valuable. They're safe in that cellar now, and there they'll stay till I get good and ready to kill 'em. (*Ursa excited*) That's the beauty of them 'air Yale locks. Lemme see — Where'd I put that key — (*Feels in his pocket*) By mighty, I b'leeve I've lost it! — No, here it is.

[*Taking it out.*]

THOMAS. Aw, Hank, lemme see them cubs!

HANK. No, sir. After the way you come in here just now, I won't let you see them cubs until they're all skinned. (*At this Ursa, terribly excited, gives a loud growl and Hank, startled, drops the key on the ground. He does not notice it, but Thomas does, and puts his foot on it. Just as Hank, startled by the growl, looks up, the bear's head is quickly jerked back and Jane appears in the window and smiles at Hank. Pause*) By mighty!

JANE. Good morning.

HANK. What on airth was that?

JANE. What?

HANK. Didn't you hear nothin'?

JANE. Why — I yawned — what did you think it was?

HANK. Nothin' — nothin' — (*Aside*) I b'leeve that dream has turned me stark, starin' crazy.



THE FOREST RING
Act II.

Thomas.—“I’d like to meet a real old soker, and cow him with my eye.”

SABRINA (*in house*). Come in to breakfast.

[*Hank collects himself with a start and exits into house. Thomas picks up key and Jane sees him. Thomas looks after Hank.*]

JANE (*to Ursa*). Oh, Ursa, Thomas has got the key! It will be ever so much easier to get it from him than Hank! — come —

[*They disappear from window.*]

THOMAS (*looking after Hank*). You won't let me see them cubs, eh? Well, then, I'll jest look at 'em anyhow.

[*He crosses to cellar door.*]

SABRINA (*in house*). Thomas —

THOMAS (*startled*). Yes'm! — I'll be right in.

[*Starts to unlock door as Jane and Moss Bud enter from house. Thomas hears them, starts guiltily, and stands with the key behind his back.*]

JANE. Look out, Moss Bud, he'll see you!

MOSS BUD. You forget; I'm invisible to all except you.

JANE. Oh, yes. What's the matter, Thomas — aren't you going to have any breakfast? (*Thomas doesn't answer*)
What have you behind your back?

THOMAS. Nothin'.

JANE. Oh, you can't fool me. I saw you pick that key up.

THOMAS. You ain't goin' to be a tattletale, are you?

JANE. Not if you'll let me see what's in the cellar.

THOMAS. What! You look in that cellar — why, there's bars in there! They'd frighten a *girl* most to death.

JANE. Aren't you afraid of bears?

THOMAS. Who, — me? No, I've been readin' all about Buckskin Bill, the boy bar hunter, and I know that if you jest look a bar right in the eyes steady — he can't do nothin' to yer.

JANE. I'll try not to be frightened. Do let me see the little bears!

THOMAS. Naw. Girls ain't built to look at bars. If you was a hunter, now, like me — but you ain't. I only wish they was bigger. I'd like to meet a real old soker, and cow him with my eye — jest like Buckskin Bill — (*He starts to un-*

lock door. *Jane beckons into house, and Ursa quickly comes and stands right behind Thomas. She stands on her hind legs, waving her paws*) Gosh! These locks is pesky things to undo! Yes-sirree, if I could only meet a real big bar I'd — [Here he catches sight of Ursa. He begins to tremble, and finally, with a yell, rushes off, leaving the key. The others show delight and amusement. Moss Bud picks up key.

JANE. Thank Heaven, we've got it! Here, Moss Bud, give it to me. Fairies don't know how to open Yale locks. (*She takes key*) Now, you look out and see if anyone comes, and we'll have these little bears safe at home before Hank's through breakfast.

[*Jane starts to unlock door. Ursa tries to help her.*

MOSS BUD. Look out, Jane! Somebody's coming!

JANE. Quick — get Ursa out of sight!

[*Moss Bud leads Ursa behind house.*

SABRINA (*entering*). I thought I heard you talkin' out here. Ain't you goin' to eat no breakfast?

JANE. Yes, Aunt Sabrina — I'll be in there in a minute.

SABRINA. Your tea'll be stone cold. Where's Thomas?

JANE. Why, he went out toward the barn a minute ago.

SABRINA. Well, this is the first time since Thomas was born that he hain't been here at meal-time. What on airth's the matter with you, child? You stand there fidgetin' around like a chipmunk in a trap. What have you got in your hand there?

JANE (*opening her left hand*). Nothing, Aunt Sabrina.

SABRINA. Jane, you've been doin' somethin' you ought not to! Open your other hand. (*Jane does so slowly, and the key falls out*) What's that?

JANE. Why — it looks like a key.

SABRINA (*picking up key*). Jane Adams, it's the key to that cellar door. How did you get it?

JANE. It — it was lying on the ground there, and I picked it up.

SABRINA. Why, child alive, that cellar's full of wild growlin' bars; I s'pose that careless Hank lost the key out of his

pocket. I'll jest keep it for a while to give him a lesson. Come in to breakfast.

[Exit into house. Enter Moss Bud and Ursa.]

MOSS BUD. What's the matter, Jane?

JANE. Oh, Moss Bud, Aunt Sabrina's got the key now, and I know we can never get it from her! (*Ursa is in despair, and the others comfort her*) Don't cry, Ursa. We'll get your babies out somehow.

MOSS BUD. You shouldn't have let the key go when you once had it!

JANE. Well, it won't help to tell me what I *should* have done; the question is, what's to be done now?

MOSS BUD. Well, there's only one thing I can see to do; — we must open the door by magic!

[*Bear brightens up.*]

JANE. That's so, we can! Where's your rule book, Moss Bud?

MOSS BUD. Here it is — let's see — (*Turning over pages*) Ah, here we are — Rule No. 47 — "To open a locked door."

JANE. But wait a minute. Hank said he was going to kill the cubs right after breakfast — and he's almost through breakfast by this time — so that, if we take them out now, we won't have time to get them safely home before he follows their tracks and shoots them.

MOSS BUD. That's so — we must keep him here somehow.

JANE. I'll tell you what we can do. You put a magic spell on the door so that, after we have taken out the little bears, Hank will not be able to open the door — and won't know the cubs have gone —

MOSS BUD. That's just fine! (*Turning over pages*) There must be a rule here that will answer. Yes — here it is — Rule No. 56 — "To prevent a door being opened by its own key." How will that do?

JANE. That's just the thing. Go ahead, we must be quick!

MOSS BUD (*reading from book*). "Oh, door, I hereby command you, in the name of Arbutus, to hear and obey this spell — (*Makes mystic signs*) *Nek you roy nopo in eman sutubra.*"

Now, Jane, I've put spell No. 56 on the door, and I'd like to see Hank or anyone else open it with a key!

JANE. That's fine, Moss Bud. I want you to teach me that spell. But now, open the door by magic.

MOSS BUD. Oh, that's easy. Let's see, where was it — oh, yes — Rule No. 47 — "To open a locked door" — (*Makes more mystic signs*) "Oh, door, I hereby command you, in the name of Arbutus, to hear and obey this spell, — *Nopo ilkiok ta ecno. Open!*"

[*Pause. Nothing happens.*]

JANE. What's the matter, — why doesn't it open?

MOSS BUD. I must have said a word wrong. I'll do it again — (*Mystic signs*) "Oh, door, I hereby command you, in the name of Arbutus, to hear and obey this spell. *Nopo ilkiok ta ecno. Open.*" (*Pause. Nothing happens*) Open, I say — (*Pause*) Oh, Jane, I don't know what's the matter. It won't open. (*Begins to cry*) Mamma oughtn't to have put me in charge of this case. I'm too young.

JANE. Come — come — we haven't time to cry. Let me see the rule book. (*Takes it*) Oh, Moss Bud, did you put spell No. 56 on the door?

MOSS BUD (*between sobs*). Yes, of course, — Rule No. 56 — "To prevent a door being opened by its own key."

JANE. Well, now you've done it! Look here, you should have put on spell No. 55. Number 56 is "To prevent a door being opened by anything *except* its own key." Oh dear, oh dear, even magic can't open it now! You should have opened the door first, and then put the other spell on. (*Beginning to cry*) You're only a poor, ignorant fairy, and you've ruined everything by your crazy magic!

[*Jane, Moss Bud and Ursa all weep together.*]

THOMAS (*outside*). Hank — Hank!

JANE (*drying her eyes*). Good gracious! Here's Thomas back again; he'll get Hank and they'll shoot Ursa; — take care of her, Moss Bud. I must get the collar and chain from the barn.

[*Exits quickly. Enter Hank from house with gun.*]

HANK. By mighty, if there ain't a bar in the yard!

[He advances and raises gun to shoot. Just as he is about to pull the trigger, Moss Bud pricks him in the leg with a thorn. He cries, "Ouch," and the gun goes off in the air. Ursa rises and prepares to show fight. Hank drops his gun and takes out his knife. Sabrina appears in doorway.]

SABRINA. Mighty souls! Hank, look out, come in the house. Don't try to fight that bar with nothin' but a knife!

[Hank and Ursa menace each other, when Jane enters quickly, with collar and chain, followed by Thomas.]

JANE. Hank — Ursa — stop! —

SABRINA. Thomas — Jane — go to the barn! Do you both want to be killed alive?

JANE *(going to Ursa)*. Ursa, remember your promise —

[Ursa quiets down, and Jane puts collar on her.]

HANK. By mighty!

SABRINA. Mighty souls!

THOMAS. Geemunny!

JANE. Hank, I'm surprised at you. An old hunter like you not being able to tell the difference between a wild bear and a tame one!

HANK. A tame bar!

JANE. Certainly, I'll show you — *(She whispers to Ursa)*

Now, do whatever I tell you — *(Aloud)* Ursa — lie down — *(Ursa follows directions)* Roll over — Get up — Speak — Dance with me —

[Music; dance between Jane, Ursa and Moss Bud. Exclamations of astonishment from the others.]

THOMAS. Ain't that jest great, though! Say, Jane, lemme hold the chain?

SABRINA. Thomas Watson, don't you dare go near that critter —

THOMAS. Aw — ma — jest lemme hold the chain!

JANE. You see, she's perfectly gentle.

HANK. She didn't look it a couple of minutes ago.

SABRINA. There's somethin' powerful queer about this.

How'd you happen to get hold of a tame bar?

THOMAS. Say, Ma — can't I jest hold the chain?

SABRINA. Thomas Watson ——

[Thomas subsides.]

HANK. Wa'al, I guess this must be quite a valuable bar. The best thing to do with it is to lock it up in the cellar, along with them cubs, and then sell it to the first circus that comes along.

JANE. But Hank, you can't sell *my* bear.

SABRINA. Your bar! Jane Adams, you didn't have that when you come up from New York.

HANK. Besides, it ain't safe fur little girls to play with bars. No — I'll jest lock it up in the cellar. Lemme see, — where'd I put the key?

[Feels in his pocket.]

JANE *(to Moss Bud)*. Moss Bud — we *must* get that key, and this is our only chance!

[Whispers to her.]

HANK. By mighty! I've lost it this time, sartin'!

SABRINA. I told you you'd lose it, carryin' it around loose in your pocket. *(Producing it)* Here it is; I was goin' to keep it awhile to teach you a lesson, but I guess you'd better lock up that bar!

[Hank takes lock in his hand and puts out the other for the key, looking at lock. Sabrina hands it to him, but Moss Bud puts her hand over Hank's and takes key from Sabrina, unseen by all but Jane. Jane has led Ursa up back, and has allowed Thomas to hold the chain.]

HANK. Wa'al, gimme the key, Sabriny ——

SABRINA. My lands, man! I gave it to you once — you must have dropped it!

HANK. I hain't never teched it, Sabriny. You must have dropped it yourself.

SABRINA. Hank Struble, do you mean to tell me that I don't know the difference between givin' you a key and droppin' it?

HANK. Sabriny Watson! don't you suppose I know the difference between takin' a key and not takin' it?

SABRINA. Jane, come and help look for that key.

[*Jane is on one side of the well, and Moss Bud, during the foregoing, has come up delightedly and is just handing her the key across the well as Sabrina calls "Jane." Jane, startled, drops the key down the well and she and Moss Bud look blankly at each other.*]

JANE. All right, Aunt Sabrina. Oh, Moss Bud, the key's in the well, and we can never — never — get it out!

MOSS BUD. We can try magic ——

JANE. No, thank you — we've tried that once too often now. [*They pretend to search.*]

SABRINA. I tell you, Hank — you must have put the key in your pocket.

HANK. And I tell you, Sabriny, I hain't teched the blame key.

SABRINA. Well, in the meanwhile, what's going to happen to the —— (*Seeing Thomas and Ursa*) Thomas Watson! [*Thomas drops chain quickly.*]

THOMAS. Aw, Ma, can't I jest hold the chain? (*Sabrina starts toward him*) All right, Ma, I won't — I only come up here to get a drink.

[*Thomas draws a bucket of water.*]

HANK. Sabriny Watson — I b'leeve you're hidin' that key!

SABRINA. Hank Struble — I tell you that — I felt you take that key jest as plain as I ever felt anything before in my life.

HANK. Now quit yer foolin', Sabriny. I felt your hand in mine, but there warn't nothin' in it.

SABRINA. Hank Struble, I tell you for the last time that —— [*Here Thomas, who has been drinking at the well, coughs violently and spits the key out. Everybody looks at everyone else.*]

SABRINA. Thomas Watson, how'd you get that key?

THOMAS (*frightened*). I don't know how I got the key — honest, Ma, I don't.

HANK. Wa'al, here it is anyhow — (*Starts for the key. Jane and Moss Bud in despair when Ursa makes a rush and, facing Hank, sits on the key and refuses to move*) Here, get off that key ——

[*Ursa waves her paw at him.*]

SABRINA. Look out, Hank! Jane, you make the critter move.

JANE. All right —— (*Aside to Ursa*) Sit still, Ursa —— (*Aloud*) Get up —— (*Pushes her. Aside*) Don't move, whatever you do. (*Aloud*) Get up — get up —— (*To others*) It's no use, — she won't budge!

HANK (*picking up gun*). She won't, eh? Wa'al, we'll see about that! Trained bars is all very well, but if they won't mind they ain't trained. Besides, I b'leeve that's the very bar I've been trackin' for two weeks — she's smelt her cubs here and come after 'em.

JANE. Yes, it is the mother of those cubs; she's come all the way from her cave to find them and take them home again. Won't you let them go, Hank?

HANK. Let 'em go, after all the trouble I've had to get 'em? Why, do you s'pose I tracked them cubs a hull day jest to let 'em go again? Besides, how do *you* know she's the mother of them cubs?

JANE. I know it because she told me so.

SABRINA. Jane Adams, air you completely mad — or jest lyin'?

JANE. Oh, I suppose you won't believe me, but last night I went to the cave by the Forest Ring, and saw all the fairies and animals, and the Fairy Queen herself said she would help me give the little bears to their mother.

THOMAS. Gee-munny!

HANK. If you ever was near that cave, you might have had a dream like mine — about fairies and things, — but you don't suppose I'm goin' to lose a couple of hard days' work jest on account of a dream, do you?

JANE. But it wasn't a dream. I saw them as plainly as I see you — and besides, here's Ursa — to prove it — and Moss Bud. Moss Bud, can't you show yourself and tell them I'm right?

MOSS BUD. They haven't entered the Ring; they can't see me.

SABRINA. What on airth air you talkin' about? A Moss Bud — an' fairies!

JANE. Can't you see her? Look — here ——
[*All look at Moss Bud and don't see her.*]

SABRINA. You've got a tech o' sun, wanderin' round the woods without a hat on; or else them story-books has turned your head.

HANK. Wa'al, I've got to go; I ain't agoin' to wait no longer fur that pesky critter to get up. If she ain't off that key when I git my gun loaded, I'll shoot her off it —
[Starts to load gun.]

SABRINA. Thomas — come in here! A wounded bar's a dangerous critter.

THOMAS. Oh, Ma — I hain't seen the cubs yet!
[Sabrina and Thomas talk in pantomime.]

JANE. Oh, Moss Bud, whatever shall we do? Everything has gone wrong, and if poor Ursa's killed it will be our fault!

MOSS BUD. Oh, I can't think of anything — *(Turning over pages of book quickly)* There isn't a single rule here that will do any good. I wish I'd never come!
[Begins to cry.]

JANE. What's the use of magic if you can't use it when you really need it? You're only a cry-baby fairy!

HANK. Now, the gun's loaded — when I say three I'm goin' to shoot — *(Levels gun)* One, two —

JANE. Ursa, get off the key —
[Ursa does so, growling. Moss Bud restrains her.]

HANK *(lowers gun and picks up key)*. I kinder thought you could make her move if you'd a mind ter. *(Crosses to cellar)* I'll jest kill them cubs now, and then there won't be no more trouble.

SABRINA. Look out, Hank, — if the old bar sees her cubs she'll show fight.

HANK. Wa'al, by mighty, if she does, it's the last fight she'll ever show!
[Pats his gun and starts to unlock door.]

MOSS BUD. Oh, Jane, I can't hold Ursa back any longer —
[Hank is bending over the door; the bear rushes toward him. He seizes his gun to fire, but the bear, turning suddenly, catches up Thomas and holds him in front of her.]

SABRINA. Hank — don't shoot — you'll hit Thomas!

JANE (*rushing up and seizing Ursa*). Ursa, don't you dare hurt that boy — don't you dare —

HANK. Keep quiet, Thomas; don't move, and she won't hug you.

[*Hank lowers his gun and Jane and the bear carry Thomas across stage.*]

JANE (*keeping one hand on the bear*). Aunt Sabrina, if you free her children, she'll let yours go.

SABRINA. Unlock the door, Hank — quick —

HANK. It'll only make her madder, Sabriny, to see her cubs now.

JANE. Very well. You can't expect a bear to know that it's all right for a man to steal her children, but wrong for her to steal his.

SABRINA. Hank! Hank, get my boy back for me!

JANE. You take care of the little bears and I'll take care of Thomas.

[*Jane, Ursa, carrying Thomas, and Moss Bud start to exeunt. As soon as Ursa turns her back to Hank, he levels gun, but Jane turns Ursa, who stands with Thomas, in front of her. Sabrina pulls Hank's gun down. Moss Bud points toward the Ring.*]

CURTAIN

ACT III

SCENE. *The Forest Ring as in Act I.*

TIME. *The next night, early evening. The sun has just set and, after the curtain rises, the stage is at first very dim with the red light of sunset, but gradually the moon rises and stage becomes light.*

DISCOVERED. *Arbutus, Peach Bloom, Mouse Ear and Quicksilver. Peach Bloom and Mouse Ear are looking off anxiously. Arbutus is seated, giving Quicksilver a lesson out of a book. He is standing before her.*

ARBUTUS. No, Quicksilver, that's very bad indeed! I don't believe you've studied an atom. If you don't know your

history any better than this one, you can't have any supper.

QUICKSILVER (*beginning to cry*). I can't help it, your Majesty — I've been so excited about Jane and Ursa, that I didn't sleep a wink all day, and I just couldn't study the old lessons.

ARBUTUS (*sternly*). Quicksilver! Such language is only worthy of a human child! The idea of a fairy not knowing his lessons! Give me the history. (*Quicksilver gives her book, sulking*). Now, who first used the expression, "Fi — fi, fo — fum"?

QUICKSILVER (*hesitates and thinks*). Fee — fi — fo — fum — Oh, I know. It was what Cinderella said when they told her she couldn't go to the ball.

ARBUTUS. You know perfectly well that's not right. Now, I'll give you one more chance. What was the first name of the Giant Killer?

QUICKSILVER (*hesitates — the Queen looking at the book — and then he slowly bends one of his wings around, looks intently at the end, and speaks*). Jack.

ARBUTUS (*looking up and seeing his last action*). Quicksilver — come here — let me see your wing! (*He does so reluctantly*) Quicksilver, I'm ashamed of you. (*He begins to cry*) Where do you suppose little fairies go who write answers on their wings? Leave the Ring — and don't come back until I send for you. (*He takes his book and exits, weeping. Arbutus turns to Peach Bloom and Mouse Ear*) No news of Jane and Moss Bud?

PEACH BLOOM. No news, your Majesty.

ARBUTUS (*crossing and looking off*). It's very strange; they should have been back by now. Mouse Ear, run and tell Quicksilver to go and find out what has become of them. Tell him to make haste, and to let me know the instant he discovers anything.

MOUSE EAR. Yes, your Majesty.

[*Exits.*]

ARBUTUS. I can't understand it; — if anything has happened to them I shall never forgive myself.

PEACH BLOOM. Look here, your Majesty, there's something coming now ——

ARBUTUS. Is it Ursa? — can you see?

PEACH BLOOM. No — it's only Blinkers ——

[*Enter Blinkers. He crosses and bows clumsily to Arbutus.*]

BLINKERS. Your Majesty — I bring news! ——

[*Goes to sleep.*]

ARBUTUS. Ah! at last I shall hear from them. Great Heavens! He's gone to sleep! Peach Bloom, wake him up.

[*Peach Bloom pokes him; he grunts and wakes up.*]

BLINKERS (*thickly*). Don't do that! What's the matter?

ARBUTUS. Quick, Blinkers, tell me the news.

BLINKERS. Your Majesty, all the hens have gone on strike.

ARBUTUS. Is that all you've got to tell me?

BLINKERS. Yes, isn't it enough? The hens say they won't stand the employment of scab labour.

[*Arbutus impatiently crosses and looks off stage.*]

PEACH BLOOM (*to Blinkers*). What do they mean by that?

BLINKERS. They say scab labour is taking the worms out of the mouths of their children. (*Getting eloquent*) The wages of setting hens are almost nothing since people began to use incubators.

[*Goes to sleep. Enter Mouse Ear.*]

ARBUTUS. Well?

MOUSE EAR. He's gone to look for them, your Majesty.

ARBUTUS. Look there, — who's that?

WHITE FACE (*entering with Antlers, and kneeling to Arbutus*).

Only White Face and Antlers, your Majesty. We thought, perhaps, there might be news from Ursa.

ANTLERS. Yes — have they come back?

ARBUTUS. No, we've had no news.

PEACH BLOOM. Here they come, your Majesty.

[*All look off.*]

MOUSE EAR. Yes, that's Ursa, and there are Moss Bud and Jane.

ANTLERS. But what's that Ursa's carrying?

WHITE FACE. It looks to me much like a human being.

ARBUTUS. A human being!

WHITE FACE. Yes; we'd better retire until we see what it all means.

[Animals and Fairies hide. Enter Moss Bud, leading Ursa, still wearing collar and chain, and carrying Thomas, followed by Jane. Ursa appears as a bear, and keeps outside the Ring. Thomas appears unconscious. They cross right, and set Thomas on the ground. He stands on his feet, but with his body bent over and unconscious.]

JANE. Thank goodness, we're here at last! That was a very good idea of yours, Moss Bud, putting Thomas into a magic sleep. *(Seeing Thomas)* Good gracious, he'll have a rush of blood to the head if we leave him like that — *(She straightens Thomas up. His body yields to her hand and remains in the position in which she places him)* But now that he's here, what shall we do with him?

MOSS BUD. Why don't you let me turn him into a fairy? I believe I could do it.

JANE. Oh, no, that would never do!

[Ursa in pantomime says to take him into her cave.]

JANE. No, I don't think he'd better go into the cave. You go in, Ursa, and leave Thomas to me; I promise you not to let him go. *(Ursa goes into the cave)* Now, Moss Bud, awaken Thomas. *[Arbutus and her attendants have entered at back during scene, and Arbutus now comes forward.]*

ARBUTUS. Wait, Moss Bud. *(Moss Bud joins the others at back, coming to Jane)* We welcome you back again, my child, but before this boy is permitted to see the Fairy Ring, I must know if he believes in fairies.

JANE. No, your Majesty, he doesn't now — but he soon will.

ARBUTUS. Oh, I see. Very well, then, since you ask it I will let him see us, even though he doesn't believe — in us. *[She touches Thomas's eyes and he wakes slowly.]*

THOMAS *(stretches and slowly feels himself all over; then sees the Fairies and stands astonished)*. Geemunny!

[While Thomas is waking, the Animals have come in and have been eagerly discussing Thomas in pantomime.]

BLINKERS (*to Arbutus*). That's him — that's the boy who robbed my nest and stole my children! Now we've got him!

THOMAS. N-no, sir, I hain't never seen your children.

JANE (*Crossing to Thomas who begins to get frightened. Aside*).

Thomas, if you want to get out of this alive, do just as I tell you.

WHITE FACE. Oh, yes —— (*Crossing and shaking his fist at Thomas*) I recognize him now. He caught my eldest son in a fox-trap. Well, I've been wanting a boy-skin rug for some time. I think this one will do nicely.

[*Thomas is behind Jane, very much frightened.*]

JANE. But you can't hurt him while he is in the Ring.

ANTLERS (*coming down*). Yes, I can. The law is that he who hurts anyone in the Ring is never allowed to enter it again. Very well, I shall kill this human cub, and then say good-bye to the Ring forever.

[*He advances towards Thomas, who cowers behind Jane, and Jane stops Antlers.*]

JANE. Your Majesty, can't you save him?

ARBUTUS. If they all have said it true, he deserves punishment. Antlers has told you the forest law.

ANTLERS. Keep out of the way, girl ——

[*Advances towards Thomas.*]

THOMAS. Here — keep off — I hain't never done nothin' to you.

[*Antlers pushes Jane aside, and seizes Thomas.*]

JANE (*calls*). Ursa — Ursa!

[*Enter Ursa as in Act I, passing behind rock and appearing as a woman.*]

URSA. What's the matter?

JANE. Oh, Ursa, save Thomas!

URSA. Antlers — stop — what are you trying to do?

WHITE FACE. Don't stop him, Ursa. He's only hunting.

URSA. Antlers — leave him alone! He's mine ——

ANTLERS. What do you want with him? He's not good for anything.

URSA. Oh, yes, he is. This is a very valuable boy. He's been trained to do tricks.

[Animals astonished. Ursa motions to Jane.]

JANE *(whispering to Thomas)*. Do whatever she tells you.

URSA. Thomas — come here — *(Thomas follows directions. Ursa takes the collar and chain from her neck and puts them on Thomas)* Lie down — roll over — walk like an animal — growl — show your teeth. *(To others)* You see how well trained he is.

BLINKERS *(crossing to Thomas and poking him in the ribs)*.

Hoot — *(Thomas hoots like an owl)* Very good. Who trained him?

URSA. Oh, boys are very quick animals to learn tricks! Well, he's done enough now. Come along.

[She takes the chain and leads him back into the cave, passing behind rock and going in as a bear.]

WHITE FACE. Hush! I hear something in the bushes.

AUNT SABRINA *(outside)*. Thomas — Thomas —

[All listen attentively.]

ANTLERS. What is that?

AUNT SABRINA *(nearer)*. Thomas — Thomas —

JANE. Good gracious! It's Aunt Sabrina looking for Thomas.

ARBUTUS. Meet her, Jane, and tell her that her child is safe.

JANE. But I may bring her into the Ring? She says she doesn't believe in fairies.

ARBUTUS. All good mothers really believe in fairies, even though they call them by very different names.

JANE. All right, your Majesty, I'll bring her in.

[Exits.]

WHITE FACE. Your Majesty, I don't want to complain, but don't you think that, if you let human beings into the Ring, you'll ruin its reputation?

ARBUTUS. Not if they are the right ones.

BLINKERS. White Face, you talk too much.

ANTLERS. Here they come.

[Animals and Fairies form background for this scene. Enter

Jane and Aunt Sabrina. Sabrina is very tired, and her clothes are torn in her struggle through the bushes.

JANE. Now, remember, Aunt Sabrina, the animals really look like men and women.

SABRINA. You're sure Thomas ain't hurt?

JANE. He's not even scratched.

SABRINA. Ef anyone had told me this mornin' that I'd be trapesin' round the woods talkin' to animals and fairies and things — (*Seeing Arbutus*) Land sakes! Jane, that woman'll catch her death o' cold out here without nothin' round her —

JANE. Hush — that's the Fairy Queen! (*To Arbutus*) Your Majesty, this is Aunt Sabrina.

[*Arbutus extends her hand to be kissed. Sabrina grasps it.*

SABRINA. How-de-do, ma'am. Jane's been tellin' me all about you, and I've come to ask you to give me my boy.

[*Enter Ursa as before.*

URSA. Arbutus, if I'm going to get back my children I — [*Sees Sabrina, and stops suddenly. Ursa and Sabrina look at each other.*

SABRINA (*to Ursa*). If you really love them cubs as if they were children, how could you keep my Thomas out here in the woods, as if he were a wild critter?

URSA. If you really love that awkward trap-setting boy as if he was good and beautiful how could you keep my children shut up between four walls, away from all fresh air, as if they were human?

SABRINA. Why, they can't feel it like a person could; they're only dumb animals!

URSA. Do you suppose that because animals can't talk they are deprived of all feeling?

SABRINA (*after a pause*). I hain't never thought of it like that.

JANE. You do see how wrong it is, don't you, Aunt Sabrina?

ARBUTUS. Yes, I'm sure she does. And now I want you two mothers to be the best of friends. (*She joins Aunt Sabrina's hand with Ursa's*) Ursa will take you to your boy, and Jane and I will arrange about getting Ursa's children back to her.

SABRINA. I'm afraid you can never make Hank let 'em go.

JANE. We'll take care of Hank!

[*Ursa leads Sabrina into the cave. Enter Quicksilver.*]

QUICKSILVER. I've found out all about them, your Majesty. Jane and Ursa stole a boy this morning, and ran away with him. I tracked them to the edge of the forest where all trace of them is lost.

[*All laugh. Ursa comes out of cave and joins Jane. They talk in pantomime.*]

ARBUTUS. Very good, Quicksilver. You are as good a messenger-boy as I know.

MOSS BUD (*running down to Arbutus*). Oh, Mamma, there's a man creeping through the bushes with his gun, all ready to shoot! [*Arbutus motions others back. They form group at the back, and watch Hank, who now enters, creeping along the ground, following the tracks of Ursa and Jane.*]

HANK (*following the tracks*). By mighty, th' ole bar's making straight fer her cave. No, she's stopped here and — gosh all fish-hooks! She set Thomas down here, and he stood up on his feet. That means she hain't hurt him. Hello! — what's this — (*Shakes his head sorrowfully*) I thought so! Poor little Thomas — here he's been lyin' on the ground, and she's rolled him over twicet. I don't know what Sabriny'll do. She was powerful fond o' that boy. It's lucky she didn't come out to look fer him like she wanted to. Must a been quite a rumpus kicked up here, by the looks o' the ground. Jane's tracks is all over the place. It ain't nat'ral fer a gal to be runnin' round the woods with bars and wild critters! (*Pausing suddenly*) By mighty! (*Decidedly*) She's a witch — I knowed it all along! Yes, sir — that's the reason that black cat o' Sabriny's thinks such a heap of her! — (*Looking into cave*) I b'lieve that bar's in there now. Wa'al, I'll make sure work of her this time. There's something movin' back thar — (*Levels gun into cave, then lowers it. When Hank raises gun, Blinkers stops his ears*) I can't seem to see jest whar she is. [*Peers intently into cave and then levels gun again.*]

JANE (*running out and appearing before Hank*). Hank, don't shoot!

HANK. Hello, it's the witch!

JANE. Don't fire into the cave. Aunt Sabrina and Thomas are in there.

HANK. Yes, I know mighty well that Thomas is in there — or ruther his remains is! But Sabriny's to hum cryin' her eyes out. You're a nice one to tell me not to shoot in here, when you've brought this hull peck o' trouble on us. No, sir, ef I didn't know you was a witch, and that the bullet'd go clean through yer 'thout hurtin' yer, blamed ef I wouldn't shoot you fust, and then the bar!

JANE. But I'm not a witch, Hank.

HANK. I ain't agoin' to look at yer, and then yer can't put no spell onto me.

[*Peers into cave again.*]

JANE (*back to Arbutus*). Don't let him shoot, your Majesty.

ANTLERS. Don't stop him, Arbutus.

WHITE FACE. Why, his shooting into the cave will simplify everything.

BLINKERS. I wish it didn't make so much noise.

JANE. Please, your Majesty, if anybody's hurt it will be my fault. Don't let Hank shoot!

ARBUTUS. Well, for your sake I'll stop him.

[*Waves her wand; Hank has been aiming into cave and, just as he is about to pull the trigger, Arbutus's act makes the gun fly out of his hand and disappear. He looks after it in blank amazement; then his eye falls on Jane, who has come down stage.*]

HANK. I s'pose you think that's real funny, don't you?

JANE. I didn't do it, Hank.

HANK. Oh, no, o' course you didn't have nothin' 'tall to do with it! Guns is used to flyin' out o' people's hands and vanishing inter the air! It's quite the reg'lar proceedin' nowadays, hain't it?

JANE. But I tell you I didn't do it, — the fairies did!

HANK. Why, o' course, the fairies done it all! They brought

that bar to Sabriny's house, and put her up to carryin' off Thomas, didn't they?

JANE. Yes, certainly they did.

HANK. Wa'al then, ef there really be fairies, they might better ha' minded their own business.

JANE. Would you believe in fairies if you saw one?

HANK. I dunno — mebbe I would —

JANE (*back to Arbutus*). Let him see you, your Majesty. I'm sure it would convince him!

ARBUTUS. Well, it's against the rules — but just this once.

[*Gives the wand to Moss Bud who comes and touches Hank's eyes. He sees them all, and stands petrified with astonishment.*]

HANK. By mighty! —

ANTLERS. Now, Arbutus, since you have revealed us to this man, you must make him answer the charges against him.

WHITE FACE. Yes, I think we should come to an understanding.

BLINKERS. He hasn't got his gun. Skin him and pick his feathers out!

ARBUTUS. Hank, the wild things of the forest say you kill them, not for food, but because you like killing.

HANK. No, marm, that hain't true. What's the difference between killin' game to eat, and killin' it to get money to *buy* things to eat!

BLINKERS. But *nobody* eats owls.

HANK. Yes — but if I didn't shoot owls somebody else would. No, if you want to stop the killin' of owls and harmless critters like that, it ain't the hunters you want to talk to. It's the fine folks in the city who wears bird's wings and such foolishness in their hats that's to blame, — not us men who has to hunt for a livin'.

ARBUTUS. That does not excuse the hunter who does what he knows is wrong just for the money it will bring him.

HANK. That's so — I hadn't never thought o' that.

ARBUTUS. As guardian of the forest creatures, I have returned good for evil. Do you know why I caused your gun to disappear?

HANK. No'm. I thought I did, but I guess I don't.

ARBUTUS. Then look!

[*She waves her wand, and Sabrina and Thomas enter from the cave.*]

JANE. You see, Hank, I told you they were there.

SABRINA. Wa'al, Hank, I was wonderin' what time you 'xpected to get here.

[*Thomas joins Jane; Moss Bud touches his eyes, and he is introduced to the others.*]

HANK (*looking at her, dazed*). An' if I'd a shot into that cave, I'd a killed Sabriny! (*To Arbutus*) That settles it, marm — I'll never shoot another harmless critter s'long as I live!

URSA (*coming down*). This is all very well, but how about *my* babies — they're just as badly off as ever.

HANK. Why, I'm dreadful sorry, ma'am, but you see I really didn't know how 'twas. I'll bring them cubs back myself first thing to-morrow mornin'.

URSA (*looking at him*). I suppose I can trust you —

SABRINA. Yes, marm, you kin.

URSA. Very well, I'll wait by the cave until they come.

ARBUTUS. I can liberate them now, Ursa, if Hank will give me the key.

HANK (*giving her key*). Here — take the pesky thing!

ARBUTUS (*taking key and touching it with wand*). Oh, key, I command you to fly to your lock and open it at once. (*She throws the key out, waving wand as in Act I*) Cellar door at Cloverdale Farm — Open! Children of Ursa, come out — follow the path to the woods — turn toward your cave — through the pine forest — to the Ring!

[*Enter three Children, dressed in cub skins; they rush over to Ursa and embrace her, all overjoyed. Moss Bud and Jane talk together.*]

HANK (*to Sabrina*). Sabriny, don't you think you might give me my answer now?

SABRINA. I won't give it to yer now, Hank, before all these people, but I don't mind telling you it's goin' to be "yes"! [*Hank and Sabrina go up stage and fraternize with Animals.*]

ANTLERS. A cup of dew to seal the compact of our friendship.
[Peach Bloom and Mouse Ear bring a pitcher, made of a large leaf, and flowers for glasses. Hank and Antlers pledge each other.]

JANE *(who has been talking to Moss Bud)*. Oh, Moss Bud, do you really mean that I can never see you again? I wanted so much to be friends with you —

MOSS BUD. Yes, Jane, a human being is only allowed to see fairies during one day. It's the old fairy law, and it's perfectly hateful. I wish I was a human child, so that I could have all the good times you've been telling me about.

JANE. I wish you were, Moss Bud, — we'd have been such chums.

ARBUTUS *(crossing to Jane and Moss Bud)*. What's the matter, children? You look very sad.

MOSS BUD. Oh, Mamma, couldn't you turn me into a human child, or Jane into a fairy, so we wouldn't have to say good-bye?

ARBUTUS. No, my child, I'm afraid not. When a human being has once entered the Ring, he can always come to it again, if he does so in sympathy, and talk to the fairies, and if he listens very hard he will find that the fairies always answer him.

MOSS BUD. You'll come — won't you, Jane?

JANE. Indeed I will — often.

MOSS BUD. I must leave you in a moment now; kiss me good-bye, Jane.

[Jane does so. A burst of merriment from the others drinking.]

ARBUTUS. The moon is going under a cloud; the twenty-four hours are up. Good-bye, Jane!

JANE. Good-bye, your Majesty! — good-bye all! *(The stage becomes dark as in Act I. General chorus of good-byes. When lights are up, Jane, Thomas, Hank and Sabrina are alone)*
 Good-bye, Moss Bud!

MOSS BUD *(faintly outside)*. Good-bye!

JANE *(softly to Sabrina)*. Didn't you hear it, Aunt Sabrina?

SABRINA (*softly*). I guess 'twas only the echo, child! Come, we must be goin' hum.

[*Hank and Sabrina exeunt, talking, followed by Jane and Thomas. A whippoorwill is heard. Stage same as in Act I. The Ring fades away. Fairy music.*]

CURTAIN

ABOUT THE SEVEN OLD LADIES OF LAVENDER TOWN

Henry Cuyler Bunner (1855-96) was an American author, who wrote short stories and light verse. He was on the staff of the humorous weekly, *Puck*. The present operetta by him is one of three, the other two being "Bobby Shaftoe" and "Three Little Kittens." The music for it may be found in a holiday edition of the "book of the opera", published by Harper & Brothers.

My memory carries me back to a day when I took part in an operetta — "Goodluck and Badluck" — the story of a beggar Prince who jumped over the palace wall and stole a kiss from a beautiful Princess. Whereupon immediately she fell ill, because the Prince did not stay and play with her and she could no longer smile. Nothing in the Kingdom was able to cheer her, and so the sage old Counsellors of the Court advised that Prince Badluck be captured and sentenced to return to the Princess the kiss he had stolen from her. All of which was done, much to the fair fortune of Badluck, the happiness of Goodluck, and the future prosperity of both together. Never were there jollier days than at the rehearsals of "Goodluck and Badluck" — grand marches, lusty choruses, repeated reaches for clear, high notes, and much parading in costumes.

And because my memory clings to those days, before the boys I knew had changed their voices, and before the girls I knew had tucked up their hair and untucked their skirts, I have selected "The Seven Old Ladies of Lavender Town" for similar joyful rehearsals. It is true that the Waxworks are called upon in the end to embrace their wives, and they all become young again! But, because I cannot become young again, I do not believe there was ever such a scene as that in which Badluck returned the kiss to Goodluck. For, you see, I was the Badluck!

THE SEVEN OLD LADIES OF LAVENDER
TOWN

AN OPERETTA IN TWO ACTS

BY HENRY C. BUNNER

*[Music by Oscar Weil contained in the edition published by
Harper & Brothers]*

Characters

LIGHTNING HASKINS, *the Showman*

GEORGE WASHINGTON	}
JULIUS CÆSAR	
ALEXANDER THE GREAT	
JOHN SMITH	
CHARLES C. CONFUCIUS	
HENRY THE EIGHTH	
NAPOLEON BONAPARTE	

*The Great Mechanical
and Conversational
Agglomeration of
Waxworks*

THE FAIRY AUNTY MACASSA

THE DUCHESS OF TIDYTOWN

MRS. SMITH	}
MRS. BROWN	
MRS. JONES	
MRS. ROBINSON	
MRS. SIMPKINS	
MRS. TIMPKINS	
MRS. TRALALA DE MONTMORENCI	

*The Seven Little Old
Ladies of
Lavender Town*

A PAGE

The Scene is laid in Kategreenawayland.

The Time is Once Upon a Time.

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THE SEVEN OLD LADIES OF LAVENDER TOWN

ACT I

The first act takes place in the afternoon, and the stage represents the interior of a booth in Tidytown Fair. It is a plain room, with a bench near the door on each side, and at the back a low platform, over which a curtain hangs. On the curtain are letters:

PROFESSOR LIGHTNING HASKINS'S <i>Great Mechanical and Conversational Agglomeration of</i> WAXWORKS

When the play begins this curtain hides the platform. Professor Lightning Haskins is standing at the door to the right.

CHORUS OF FAIR-GOERS (*outside*).

We are the folks of Tidytown,
And clever folk are we;
Unto the fair we gayly go,
The wondrous things to see.

And if our eyes were microscopes,
We'd look within each tent,
And we'd admire this merry show
And never pay a cent.

No, never pay a cent!

HASKINS (*speaks*). What! never pay a cent! (*Gloomily*)
That's the truth. The people hereabouts won't pay for any-
thing. They get all the sights free if they can; if they can't,

they just stand around the door and look at the signs. I've been travelling with these waxworks of mine for seven years to-day, and I never found such a mean fair as this one. People hereabouts don't seem to appreciate true art. (*He looks out the door*) There they go, flocking into the show of that fellow with the common old-fashioned waxworks. Now my waxworks are an extra fine, fairy-made article, and they move their arms and legs and make speeches, and nobody comes to see them. Oh, it's discouraging to an artist! There! There goes a grand lady with a long train. I'll wager she goes over the way. No. Good gracious! She's coming straight here. (*Enter, very grand and stately, and muffled in a great cloak, the Duchess of Tidytown. Haskins bows very low*) Good afternoon, madam.

DUCHESS (*sternly*). Your Grace!

HASKINS. My — what? I beg your pardon, madam.

DUCHESS. Your Grace!

HASKINS (*flattered*). Oh no, madam. That's not my title.

Just Professor Lightning Haskins — simply Professor —

DUCHESS (*severely*). Will you call me your Grace?

HASKINS (*meekly*). Oh yes, certainly, madam — your Grace, I mean.

DUCHESS. Do you know who I am?

HASKINS. No, your Grace.

DUCHESS. I am the Duchess of Tidytown.

HASKINS. Delighted to meet your Grace. Allow me to introduce myself — Professor Lightning —

DUCHESS (*paying no attention to him*). I have come here to satisfy myself as to the character of your exhibition.

HASKINS (*going towards the curtain*). Certainly, your Grace.

Let me show you the Grand Agglomeration —

DUCHESS. No. I don't want to see it; I only wish to hear about it.

HASKINS. Same price, your Grace. This show is so expensive that I can't afford to talk about it for nothing.

DUCHESS. Here is a guinea — a golden guinea. Give me as little conversation as you can for the money.

HASKINS. As little?

DUCHESS. Just as little as you can, or a trifle less. You have only to answer my questions. I wish to know if your exhibition is a proper one for proper young ladies.

HASKINS. My show is the properest show in all the fair, your Grace. The character of my waxworks is unexcelled, and they utter only the noblest sentiments, out of the copy-books.

DUCHESS. If I am satisfied with your performance, I will send my daughters here this evening. But there must be nothing in the entertainment to offend the daughters of a Duchess.

HASKINS. Madam, your Grace, I mean — my waxworks would not offend anybody. Just look at them. (*He draws the curtain aside*) Here they are — George Washington, Julius Cæsar, Alexander the Great, John Smith — all excellent men.

DUCHESS. Very respectable, I believe. They have been dead some time, have they not?

HASKINS. I guarantee them to be all dead. Here is Confucius, the Chinese philosopher, Napoleon Bonaparte, and Henry the Eighth.

DUCHESS. Henry the Eighth! But he was a man who had six wives!

HASKINS. Oh, but he hasn't now. He is quite reformed since he joined my show. He is now a confirmed old bachelor.
[He closes the curtain.]

DUCHESS. And you are sure that your exhibition is fit for a Duchess's daughters?

HASKINS. Your Grace, it's fit for two Duchesses' daughters. (*Confidentially*) I don't mind telling you, your Grace, that I got the whole outfit from a fairy, who sold them out cheap. They are all very respectable people, whom she changed into waxworks because they offended her. They are not at all common waxworks, and they are to be seen every afternoon and evening for the low price of one shilling — three shillings to Duchesses' daughters.

DUCHESS. Very well. I shall expect you to give a private performance, for the entertainment of my daughters, at precisely

seven o'clock this evening. The vulgar public must be excluded.

HASKINS. From what I have seen of this town, your Grace, that will be easy. Going already? Just look once more at the waxworks. (*Drawing the curtain aside*) They are as natural as life.

DUCHESS. No, I cannot. If I should look at them any longer, I should want to pinch them, and that would be beneath the dignity of a Duchess.

[*She goes out proudly.*]

HASKINS. Well, this is something like business at last. Three shillings apiece! I hope she's got a large family. Aha! I feel like the great original Haskins once more.

SONG

1. I dust my waxworks off at night,
And in the early dawning, O,
I hang my sign-board up in sight,
And lower down my awning, O.

For *I'm* Lightning Haskins, O, for *I'm* Lightning Haskins, O.
I do not know a better show than that of Lightning Haskins, O.*

2. I putty up the horrid holes
Where people pinch their calveses, O;
I sell admission cards in shoals,
The wholeses and the halveses, O.

For *I'm* Lightning Haskins, O, for *I'm* Lightning Haskins, O.
I do not know a better show than that of Lightning Haskins, O.*

3. I rise and speak a little speech
When people come to see them, O;
But though their bloom is like the peach,
I wouldn't like to be them, O.

For *I'm* Lightning Haskins, O, for *I'm* Lightning Haskins, O.
I do not ax to turn to wax, for I am Lightning Haskins, O.*

* A quiet dance step of four or eight measures.

Yes, I am Lightning Haskins, but it does not look as though people generally knew it. (*Looking out*) Ah! my luck has changed. Here comes an audience — all in a row.

[*Enter Mrs. Smith, Mrs. Brown, Mrs. Jones, Mrs. Robinson, Mrs. Simpkins, Mrs. Timpkins, and Mrs. Tralala de Montmorenci.*]

HASKINS. Very glad to see you, ladies. Lightning Haskins — Professor Lightning Haskins, at your service.

MRS. SMITH. You are very polite, sir. Allow us to introduce ourselves.

CHORUS

THE SEVEN OLD LADIES.

1. We are old ladies of extra gentility;
All thro' the world we are wandering free,
And we blend our decorum with lightsome agility;
We're anxious to see what it is we can see.
We're so polite and we dress so prettily,
We discourse unto all so very wittily,
That we never receive the least mite of a frown.
We're the seven old ladies of Lavender Town,
Old ladies of Lavender Town.
2. When we were young we were noted for naughtiness,
Wilful and petulant persons were we;
But we all have been properly punished for haughtiness,
We're husbandless now, and we're homeless, you see.
We're so polite and we dress so prettily,
We discourse unto all so very wittily,
That we never receive the least mite of a frown.
We're the seven old ladies of Lavender Town,
Old ladies of Lavender Town.

MRS. SMITH. If you'd like to hear anything more about us, sir, we shall be happy to tell you anything you wish to know. Our history is very interesting.

HASKINS (*pompously*). Not at all — not at all. It's not necessary. I have no doubt that you are properly respectable

persons whom I may with propriety admit to my show. The exhibition will now begin. (*He draws aside the curtain*) Behold, ladies, the — Hold on a moment (*letting curtain close*). One shilling apiece, if you please.

MRS. JONES. Mrs. Brown has all the shillings, I believe.

MRS. BROWN. Excuse me; I gave them to Mrs. Tralala de Montmorenci.

MRS. TRALALA DE MONTMORENCI. Mrs. Smith took them away from me when we came to the shop where they sold dolls. I'm so giddy, you know.

MRS. SMITH (*producing money*). Here they are. But I have only six shillings. Would you mind taking two sixpences for Mrs. Tralala de Montmorenci, sir?

HASKINS (*taking money*). Not at all. (*He draws curtain aside*) You now behold, ladies, the Great Mechanical and Conversational Agglomeration of Waxworks. These, ladies and gentlemen — ladies — I beg your pardon — are the only waxworks in the world that really work. You will now hear them recite their pieces and move their arms and legs, all for one shilling apiece.

MRS. TRALALA DE MONTMORENCI. And two sixpences. Oh, I forgot! I oughtn't to talk.

[*The curtain being drawn aside, displays the Waxworks seated in chairs. As Haskins calls upon each one, he rises, speaks his piece with appropriate gestures, and sits down. Haskins walks along the platform, pointing out the characters.*]

HASKINS. Here, ladies and gentlemen, you see the great Julius Cæsar. This famous Roman general and world-famed ruler lived several centuries ago, and is now dead. His most notable action during his life was the burning of his ships — an act of wasteful extravagance, for which he was severely censured by the Roman Senate. He also crossed the Rubicon, an unparalleled feat in those days. Julius Cæsar will now move his arms and legs, and speak his piece. Abra-cadabra!

JULIUS CÆSAR. All Gaul is divided into three parts —

THE SEVEN OLD LADIES (*together*). Oh, he needn't go on.

HASKINS. Philopena, Julius! (*Julius Cæsar is instantly motionless*) We will proceed to the next. This, ladies and gentlemen, is George Washington, the Father of his Country, first in peace, first in war, and first in the hearts of his countrymen. (*The Waxworks execute the appropriate salute*) Now, George, Abracadabra! You see, I have only to say Abracadabra to start them, and Philopena to stop them. Abracadabra, George!

GEORGE WASHINGTON. When I arrived at the age of seven years my father presented me with a bright new hatchet, and I at once amused myself with cutting down a valuable cherry-tree to which the old man was greatly attached. When my father arrived and beheld the ruin I had wrought he inquired, in tones of deep feeling, "Who has cut down my cherry-tree?" I immediately replied, "Father, I cannot ——"

THE SEVEN OLD LADIES (*together*). Oh, please make him stop! He looks *so* much better with his mouth shut!

HASKINS. Philopena, George! The next one, ladies and gentlemen, is Alexander the Great. Owing to his unfamiliarity with the English language, Alexander is unable to express himself as he would wish to. He will therefore appear only in his celebrated act of weeping for more worlds to conquer. Abracadabra, Alexander! (*Alexander weeps*) Philopena! We now pass on, ladies and gentlemen, to the world-renowned John Smith, founder of the immortal Smith family. Here you gaze upon the only and original John Smith. All other John Smiths exhibited in any other concern are base and spurious imitations.

MRS. SMITH (*repressing a sob*). Pardon me, sir, but please do not make him talk. You cannot understand, but it awakens painful memories to me.

MRS. JONES. We prefer our waxworks silent.

HASKINS. Certainly, ladies. Here we have the great Confucius — Charles C. Confucius, of China, the gentleman who invented the Chinese alphabet, which contains seventy-one thousand four hundred and sixty-nine letters and three postal cards. This is Henry the Eighth of England. He was a

King when he was alive, and he is dusted off twice as often as any other waxwork in the show. And here, ladies and gentlemen, the exhibition closes with the great Napoleon Bonaparte, the original inventor of white duck trousers. Now, ladies and gentlemen, you have seen the wonders that it is my privilege to exhibit to you, and you may go home and marvel at the gigantic progress of science and art without extra charge.

[During the lecture the Seven Old Ladies have followed Haskins, expressing surprise and pleasure at the sight of each Waxwork. At the close of the discourse they appear much affected. At close of lecture Haskins draws the curtain.]

CHORUS

THE SEVEN OLD LADIES.

1. We are very much pleased with the beautiful show;
You've told us some things we're delighted to know.
In your whole exhibition there's nothing that lacks;
We're pleased with your ways, and we're pleased with your
wax.

But if you don't mind we will drop just here
A sorrowful tear, a simple tear.

The cause of that tear you may not know;
'Tis no offence to your splendid show —
Oh, oh, the beautiful show!

2. They remind us too much of the long ago,
These beautiful folks in your beautiful show;
They recall the sad time when in anger and pride
The laws of politeness we boldly defied.
We were rude to our husbands one terrible day,
And the Fairy Macassa, she took them away;
And so that is the reason, as you may know,
That we weep at the sight of your lovely show —
Oh, oh, the beautiful show!

MRS. SMITH (*brokenly*). Thank you, sir. It — is — very — interesting.

MRS. JONES (*almost weeping*). We have been very much interested.

MRS. BROWN (*mournfully*). I feel as if I were going to cry.

MRS. TRALALA DE MONTMORENCI (*weeping*). I don't believe I could giggle if I tried.

HASKINS. You seem to take waxworks pretty hard.

MRS. SMITH. You cannot understand, sir. By your leave, I will tell you our sad story. Although we seem so old, we are young and beautiful. Seven years ago we were seven lovely brides, and we lived in Lavender Town, near Rosemary Lane. Alas, we quarrelled with our good husbands, and they quarrelled with us, although we were most desirable wives. To punish us for our bad tempers, the Fairy Auntie Macassa — we had no fairy godmother, but only a fairy auntie — turned us into seven old ladies, and condemned us to roam the world in search of our husbands, whom she turned into something else — we really don't know what.

HASKINS (*aside*). Good gracious! the Fairy Auntie Macassa! Why, that's *my* fairy! And these must be the wives of my waxworks. What will become of my business if they find it out?

MRS. JONES. And all these years we have been wandering about, hoping to find our husbands somewhere. And we have been very much affected by a peculiar coincidence. Your beautiful waxworks have the same first names as our husbands, who were called ——

MRS. SMITH (*sobbing*). John!

MRS. JONES (*sobbing*). George!

MRS. BROWN (*sobbing*). Julius!

MRS. TRALALA DE MONTMORENCI (*sobbing*). Alexander!

THE SEVEN OLD LADIES (*together, sobbing*). And Henry, and Charles, and Napoleon!

HASKINS (*aside*). I must get them out of here at once, or they will take their husbands away with them. (*Aloud*) Ladies, you must excuse me, but this show closes promptly at five, and it's two seconds past five now.

MRS. SMITH. Oh, dear me, sir, we're sorry. We won't detain you. But perhaps you will allow us ——

HASKINS. I'll allow you anything — only this show closes promptly ——

MRS. SMITH. If you'll only allow us to sing one little song before we go!

HASKINS (*desperately*). Well, sing it, and go. Never mind the key.

MRS. SMITH. It is a song which the fairy told us to sing, and if our husbands hear it they will recognize us.

HASKINS (*aside*). Oh! oh! oh! I'm done for!

CHORUS

THE OLD LADIES.

1. Lavender Village is far, far away,
Over the hills for a year and a day.
Can you remember the happier hours
Spent in the rosemary, rosemary bowers?
Out in the garden the tea-table set,
Out in the garden the tea-table set, —
Lavender Village, Lavender Village,
Lavender Village, oh, can we forget?

THE WAXWORKS.

2. Lavender Village is far, far away.
When we were there, oh, why did we not stay?
We can remember, remember aright,
When we were there we were not so polite.
We can remember you got in a pet,
We can remember you got in a pet.
Lavender Village, Lavender Village,
Lavender Village,* oh, can we forget?

HASKINS (*drawing curtain aside*). What is this?

[*Tableau. The Seven Old Ladies and the Waxworks recognize each other. Haskins is desperate.*]

THE SEVEN OLD LADIES. Give us our husbands!

* At the close of the act the curtain begins to descend at this point.

HASKINS. Never! They're mine. I bought them from the fairy. This show closes promptly at five. I don't want to be impolite, but — get out!

MRS. SMITH. We'll have them yet.

[*Haskins tears his hair, and urges The Seven Old Ladies out. They depart, stretching out their arms to the Waxworks, who stretch out their arms, but cannot leave their places. All sing "Lavender Village."* Haskins tears his hair again.

CURTAIN

ACT II

The scene is the same, at night. The curtain of the platform is drawn away, and the Waxworks are seen covered up with sheets or furniture covers. And while they are covered up they sing.

CHORUS

WAXWORKS.

For life in a waxwork show,
For home in a country fair,
Where you're always, always on the go,
We do *not*, do *not* precisely care:
For life in a waxwork show,
For home in a country fair,
Where you're always, always on the go,
We do *not* precisely care.

For our hair is dropping out,
We're a half-inch thick with dust,
And folks who are full of lingering doubt,
They pinch thro' the tender crust.
For life in a waxwork show,
For home in a country fair,
Where you're always, always on the go,
We do *not*, do *not* precisely care;

For life in a waxwork show,
 For home in a country fair,
 Where you're always, always on the go,
 We do not precisely care.

[Haskins enters, and proceeds to take off their covers and dust them off with a feather duster.]

HASKINS. Here's a nice piece of business! If I hadn't that engagement to entertain the Duchess's daughters to-night, I'd pack up and get out of the town before those women could come back. I've said Abracadabra to these miserable waxworks until I can't say it any more; and the spell doesn't seem to work as it used to. The fairy didn't tell me that these waxworks had wives, or I wouldn't have bought them. Well, it's time for the Duchess's daughters. And here they are, right on time.

[Enter the Duchess's Daughters, cloaked and hooded.]

CHORUS

THE DUCHESS'S DAUGHTERS.

1. Oh, we are the Duchess's, the Duchess's girls,
 And proper young people are we;
 Our hair is in tight little, tight little curls,
 And we always take five o'clock tea.

1ST SOLO. We like very much to see shows,

2ND SOLO. If they are instructive to youth,

3RD SOLO. And yours is the kind, we are led to suppose,
 Where the showman strictly tells the truth.

Chorus

And yours is the kind, we are led to suppose,
 Where the showman strictly tells the truth.

2. Museums are horribly, oh, horribly low,
 And so are menageries too;
 But you have an excellent, excellent show,
 And a man of refinement are you.

1ST SOLO. So show us no horrible shapes,

2ND SOLO. No monkeys in cocoanut trees,
3RD SOLO. No lions or tigers, hyenas or apes,
And no hippo-po-potamus, please

Chorus

No lions or tigers, hyenas or apes,
And no hippo-po-potamus, please.

HASKINS (*obsequiously*). Always, young ladies; I always tell the truth, and (*confidentially*) a great deal more. Please be seated. The show — the exhibition — is about to begin. (*They seat themselves on the benches, and he begins his lecture*) Here, ladies and gentlemen, you see the great Julius Cæsar. He is now dead. This was an unparalleled feat in those days. Julius Cæsar will now speak his piece. Abracadabra, Julius.

JULIUS CÆSAR. When I arrived at the age of seven years my father presented me with a bright new hatchet, and I at once —

HASKINS. Hold on! That isn't your piece. "All Gaul is divided into three parts —"

JULIUS CÆSAR. It ain't.

HASKINS. What's that?

JULIUS CÆSAR. It ain't.

HASKINS. Never mind if it isn't. You say so.

JULIUS CÆSAR. I won't.

HASKINS. What does this mean?

JULIUS CÆSAR. We've struck.

GEORGE WASHINGTON. We have formed the Waxworks Union.

ALEXANDER. And we won't waxwork.

JULIUS CÆSAR. Unless we can have our wives again.

[*The ladies applaud.*]

THE DUCHESS (*entering, followed by a Page with a bandbox*).

What is this I hear? Unseemly language from waxworks?

Is this the exhibition to which I have sent my daughters?

HASKINS (*desperately*). I beseech your Grace's pardon. My waxworks have struck, and I can't do anything with them.

(*To the Waxworks*) Philopena, the whole lot of you.

THE WAXWORKS. Philopena yourself.

DUCHESS. Let us submit this matter to arbitration. What do these gentlemen want?

THE WAXWORKS. We want our wives.

DUCHESS. Quite right and proper. Give them their wives.

HASKINS. I haven't got their wives. I can't give them any wives.

DUCHESS. Then I will.

HASKINS. You will?

DUCHESS. Yes. Here they are.

[The Duchess's Daughters rise and throw off their wraps, appearing as The Seven Old Ladies, only made young again. They form a line and sing.]

Chorus. — THE SEVEN OLD LADIES.*

[And they all courtesy.]

HASKINS. But — look here; you can't do that. Nobody can do that sort of thing but the Fairy Aunt Macassa.

DUCHESS. And I am the Fairy Aunt Macassa.

SONG

1. I am an able professional fairy,
 Lightsome and sprightsome, capricious and airy;
 High in all fairyland is my position,
 And guarding your morals my excellent mission;
 Tho' stern my decrees when a mortal is sinning,
 As great is my joy when forgiveness he's winning;
 And here is a case where I'm bound to consider —
 The case of a wife who must live like a widder,
 A wife who must live like a widder.
2. I am an able professional fairy,
 Mostly of sudden repentance I'm wary;
 Still, when I see how these wanderers, blighted,
 Who earnestly wish to be fast re-united,

* The chorus is a repetition of the first verse of the song in the first act, with the word "young" substituted for "old."

Are promising never to quarrel or squabble,
And never from love's narrow pathway to wobble,
Sweet mercy with justice I surely must mingle,
And pity the husband who lives as if single,
The husband who lives as if single.

Do you not recognize me?

[She throws off her cloak, and appears in a brilliant costume.]

HASKINS. I don't know whether I do or not. Where are your wings?

DUCHESS *(beckoning to the Page)*. Here in this bandbox. You don't want to make me go to the trouble of putting them on, do you?

HASKINS. Oh, no, your Grace. But you won't mind my looking at them, will you? *(He takes the wings out)* What'll you take for them?

DUCHESS. They are not for sale. I use them in my business. *(Haskins puts them back)* I have come here to announce that as the seven young married couples of Lavender Town are sincerely penitent for their past naughtiness, I have decided to pardon them, and release them from their spell. By my marvellous power I have changed these Seven Old Ladies back to Seven Young Brides, and by my marvellous power I will now free these seven Waxworks.

[She takes Haskins's stick and waves it. The Waxworks descend from the platform, and each one embraces his wife.]

MRS. SMITH. John!

JOHN SMITH. Jemima!

MRS. JONES. George!

GEORGE WASHINGTON. Gloriana!

MRS. BROWN. Julius!

JULIUS CÆSAR. Josephine!

MRS. TRALALA DE MONTMORENCI. Alexander!

ALEXANDER THE GREAT. Anne!

MRS. ROBINSON, MRS. SIMPKINS, AND MRS. TIMPKINS. Our husbands!

NAPOLEON, CONFUCIUS, AND HENRY THE EIGHTH. Our wives!

CHORUS

THE SEVEN OLD LADIES AND THE WAXWORKS.

We have made an end of wax and woe,
And we're ourselves again,
And now we will live together until —
We don't know when.

It's very much more pleasant to live together so,
Than trapesing round the country or than being in a show,
Than trapesing round the country or than being in a show.

HASKINS. And I — what will become of me?

DUCHESS. Don't worry. I'll make you a waxwork yourself,
and sell you to somebody else.JULIUS CÆSAR. And now, dear Fairy, pray excuse us if we
seem to ask too much, but —

MRS. SMITH. Our husbands are still waxworks.

GEORGE WASHINGTON. If you could conveniently change us
back.DUCHESS. Oh, certainly. I will change you back to your
natural shapes.HASKINS (*maliciously*). Perhaps you'll do that — by your
“marvellous power.”

DUCHESS. I will.

HASKINS (*defiantly*). Well, do it, then.

DUCHESS. I will — as soon as the curtain falls.

FINALE

OMNES.

Lavender Village is far, far away,
Over the hills for a year and a day.
Well we remember the bright, happy hours
Blissfully spent in its rosemary bowers!

WAXWORKS.

Leaving the show without sigh or regret.

OLD LADIES.

Never again will we get in a pet.

OMNES.

Lavender Village, Lavender Village,
Lavender Village, we ne'er will forget.

CURTAIN

HALT!
CHILDREN TURN BACK
PARENTS AND TEACHERS AND
LIBRARIANS READ AHEAD

AN INTRODUCTION WHICH IS AN APPENDIX

I have asked my publishers to print my Introduction as an Appendix. When children open a book, it is a dampener to the spirit for them to be met with preachment, with historical verification and cross-reference, with instruction. Such antiquarian mood has kept many a youthful reader away from Walter Scott's novels. I think that a long explanation should be placed where they can do least harm to human interest.

This compilation is not a text-book; its chief aim is, as Mr. E. V. Lucas says the aim of all juvenile literature should be, to give children a good time. Limitations of copyright, strictures of space have prevented the inclusion of plays so well known and so easily procurable that their presence here would somehow mean a repetition — like Maurice Maeterlinck's "The Blue Bird" and "The Betrothal", J. M. Barrie's "Peter Pan", Rabindranath Tagore's "The Post Office", and Josephine Preston Peabody's "The Piper." These are dramas not distinctively juvenile, but which, because of the spiritualized value of youth in them appeal alike to young and old.

I have also omitted Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream", though I had the gracious permission of Ben Greet, Esq., and my publishers, to include his commendable arrangement of the play, made for amateur use. I left it out, even though I had the value of his stage directions, because there are so many texts so flexible that practical versions may be cut from the original to suit every need. There are several plots in this particular play of enchantment, and, if one has the belief as I have — that the entanglement of the loves of Lysander and Hermia, of Demetrius and Helena is scarcely "pleasant" for young folks, it is possible to join into a delightful unity such scenes as deal with Oberon, Titania, Puck, and

these "ampen home-spuns", presided over by Bottom, the Weaver. But there is no doubt in my mind that "A Midsummer Night's Dream" is such stuff as good plays for children are made of, just as Mendelssohn's Overture for this Shakespeare fantasy is the music incarnate for fairy feet.

The plays in this volume are selected because of their varied story element; they were not written to prove anything except that the more one is brought in contact with imaginative literature, the more is imagination fed; and the wider the life adventures of fictitious characters, the more wide does our own experience become. There is not any attempt to maintain in the choice of plays a balance between realism and fancy, first because the preponderance of a child's thoughts should be coloured by "high conception", and second, I am frank to admit, because the best plays for children are bred of such elements as appeal to the imaginative side of youth. I regret that I have found no dramas of a "practical nature to include in this collection, whose chief claim is that these dramas selected will stand some of the tests of good literature at the same time that they are thoroughly actable and easily adaptable to amateur stage needs. Mrs. Burnett's "The Little Princess", in its dramatized form, has been used more extensively than Mrs. Kate Douglas Wiggin's "The Bird's Christmas Carol", and the miniature playlets made from Miss Alcott's "Little Women" and "Little Men." While there are innumerable dramatizations of Dickens, I have found no efforts worthy the feeling and tone of "The Christmas Carol." In other words, though the "educational woods" may be full of "supplemental reading" plays to fit every occasion — patriotic and practical, such dialogues have generally been shaped by uncharismatic hands — hence wrongly conceived and tamely imagined.

I have looked in vain for some worthy vehicle to satisfy a child's desire to be Pocahontas, or some drama on this theme as distinctive as Longfellow's narrative poem. I wanted the play, within the compass of juvenile interest, to body forth the significant incidents in the life of, and traits in the character of Abraham Lincoln. But there is nothing as graphic or dramatic

ply direct and reticently beautiful as John Drinkwater's "Lincoln" — not a play for children, yet easily within their range as a chronicle of events. Though the library shelves are full of story plays from history, and biographical plays, there is still a poverty of real dramatic material along these lines. Is there a drama for children on Joan of Arc which is worthy a place by the side of Boutet de Monvel's pictures or Mark Twain's biography of the peasant girl of France? Where is there to be found a play on Robin Hood, as full of greenwood tang as the ancient ballads or Howard Pyle's story? Material is lying loose and no one will use it as it should be used. My mind has dwelt on all such considerations during the preparation of this volume, and my various inclinations have gone unrequited.

And for one significant reason:— whenever an art becomes the hand-maiden of education, it suffers by reason of the fact that it is cramped into shape to prove some theory, to demonstrate some principle. See what Froebel's philosophy did to kindergarten literature for a long while: the artists were enslaved to draw pictures "architecturally" in accord with the "gifts"; language and line became stiff and matter-of-factly representative. Kindergarten songs — both in words and music — became literal and false. With the discovery of "dramatic instinct", "expression as an aid to reading", "gesture as a way toward grace and freedom" — and the other various symptoms grouped under the one head of "educational dramatics", a mushroom growth of plays has sprung up to illustrate certain reactions to dramatic stimuli, forecast by the educators. They are now running to the drama as a catch-all and a cure-all for every social evil; plays for social betterment, for nationalization, for farm and fireside, for group consciousness and community pride, are being written plentifully, — but they are either too local or so timely that they are scarcely suited for print, since the cause for them quickly vanishes.

This "dramatic instinct" is all very praiseworthy in itself — but not a new discovery. The living quality of all great literature is its dramatic force: how otherwise would the ballads stir one? why do the clan songs and battle cries of the past still

tingle the blood? Every creative reader is a dramatist. I will go this far with the educator: it is one of the natural instincts of the child to stage what is seen, what is read. It is, therefore, not unwise, with a group of young people, to begin group dramatizations of the stories liked best: in this way one may reach greater depths of understanding of the story; humour may be brought to the fore by such action. For one becomes quickened to a sense of drama in all live situations. Sometimes this sense of drama becomes overstimulated, and the Juvenile Courts are filled with the evil effects of an unwise strain on imagination and emotion. But educators believe that the disquieting consequences of such stimuli as lurid melodrama or hair-raising movies offer might be circumvented or counter-influenced by giving outlet, through "educational dramatics", to individual pent-up feeling. A boy who has the desire to be a thief is given the opportunity in play of being one; then, in contrast, he is allowed to be King Arthur. He has a standard of ethical comparison, and his outlawry is spent.

Such character reactions were found to breed excellent results when Mrs. Heniger established her Educational Theater, of which Mark Twain was such an enthusiastic director. Since the time she wrote her first book describing the history of this social experiment, and since Mrs. Emma Sheridan Fry wrote her handbook, "Educational Dramatics", in which she defined the processes by which the dramatic instinct expressed itself, there have been various offshoots of the movement. But the use of drama in education was not an entirely new thing. In the early eighteenth century Madame deGenlis and Berquin had written little plays of education; even the Edgeworths — father and daughter — had formulated beliefs as to the ethical value of staid dialogue. Modern educational dramatics are, therefore, merely a return to an old method of catching child interest, utilizing juvenile physical grace and directing juvenile natural imitativeness: in other words, of giving outlet to ethical conduct.

Thus, drama has entered the mill of service, and the writing of plays for children has mostly been done to satisfy the sparse

means of producing such plays in the class-room, in the church hall, or in the assembly-room of settlement houses. Perfunctory courses are given in normal grades on how to dramatize a simple story, on how to produce it along lines of practical stage directing. But somehow the spirit, the beauty, the depth of the theater is missing. And it is just this which will have to be put back into dramatization for children, even as beauty had to be put back in kindergarten books. The cry is raised by devotees of the "dramatic instinct": "Our children's emotions have been starved. Give them drama." But instead of answering this slogan beneficially, I find a deplorably unemotional lot of plays being written — dramatizations of geography, grammar, arithmetic!

I have given, in the present collection, modern examples of some of the old forms of drama, like puppet plays, Punch and Judy, and Pageants. But I have looked everywhere for a modern example of the "processional" which would be to the player what a mural of St. George and the Dragon might be to the eye. Our writers are composing pageants overweighted with "purpose" — the desire to socialize the miner's work or something of the sort.

It has been my one aim, in editing the plays in this book, to maintain, as far as I was able, the spirit of a good time which is born of clean, wholesome amusement. I have no educational axe to grind where the dramatic instinct for children is concerned. But, to judge by the host of plays I have read as a preparation for this "Treasury", I am fearful that joy is being driven from the plays written for the schoolroom. Remember, perfunctory dialogue is not drama!

MONTROSE J. MOSES.

A READING LIST

This is not a technical bibliography, though it attempts to cover the salient features of the movement to select better plays for schools and colleges; and it gives a sufficient number of references on "educational dramatics" to enable the reader to go further afield. There being, in this "Treasury", a few plays which are descendants of older forms, it has been thought well to include references to a few books, treating historically of the development of the forms which have thus survived for revival.

A large literature, of ephemeral character, is collecting on the practical aspects of "educational dramatics." There has been no attempt here to include such titles in great number, inasmuch as in every public library *The Reader's Guide* is made so accessible. Individual experiments in group-playwriting, such as have been carried on by the Francis W. Parker School, of Chicago, have been capably described and analyzed in special publications, procurable on application to the school itself.

While important in any dramatic work of an educational nature, — folk dances, singing games, and songs have not been listed, as they have no direct bearing on the plays contained in this volume. But some of the books here mentioned contain ample bibliographies for the student's use.

As for individual plays, no separate list is given, first, because others have done the task to date, and secondly, because so many of the plays are ephemeral. At best, a bare enumeration of titles has only indirect value, since all plays need to be carefully read and weighed in the light of special school conditions and occasions.

Care must be taken, in considering many of the titles in such lists of plays and pageants, that the spirit of the Great War — which occasioned the writing of so many of them —

has not made them obsolete, now the War is ended. But, in the place of War has come the problem of Americanization, and that subject is now being dramatized in the usual "utilitarian" manner.

I have not attempted, under the subjects of Pantomime, Puppet, Shadow Play, and Pageantry, to note articles in the various art and drama magazines, for they are to be found recorded in the indices of the various magazine guides.

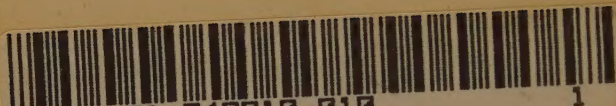
The present references, however, will probably satisfy the reader who wishes to know exactly in what way the discovery of the "dramatic instinct" in children is influencing the plays for children, and the various school theories under which the coming generation is being moulded.

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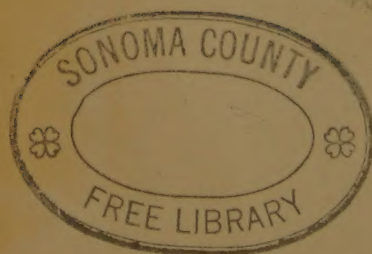
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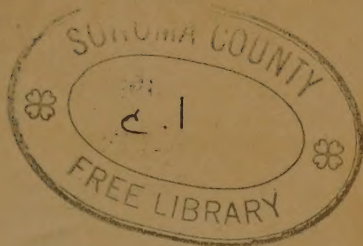
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